THE KHAN'S BOOK OF VERSE

ROBERT KIRKLAND KERNIGHAN

To Mrs. Lew Purdy

from Dick and Margaret Adams

6-28-68

THE KHAN'S BOOK OF VERSE

"THE WIGWAM"

Rockton Ont.
CANADA

THE KHAN

Robt.
Kirkland
Kernighan

The Khan's Book of Verse

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Foreword

The Khan—Robert Kirkland Kernighan—has been known to readers of The Toronto Evening Telegram these many years past, through his verse and prose contributions to its columns. His fame extends throughout the Dominion from Halifax to Vancouver, and he is honoured by all who love Canada and things Canadian. The verses in this little book are but a fraction of what he has written, and have been selected because they are much more than faithful and beautiful pictures of Canadian rural life. They best reveal the author himself — a brave, original Canadian who can see the Ideal in everyday reality.

* * *

A word of his own, published thirty years ago, has application here:

"I heard the sudden Binder roar,
I heard the Reaper shout;
God flung me on His threshing floor,
His oxen trod me out!

"And here I lie, all bruised and brown,
Beneath the trampling feet;
The Ragweed and the Thistledown,
The Cockle and the Wheat!"

* * *

Whether you think these verses ragweed or cockle, or finest wheat, matters little. They are something of the Khan himself seeking clear expression through the limitations of speech. In sober truth they are rhythmic fragments of the warp and woof of an original human soul. The words of the Ayrshire Ploughman Poet were not more honest and seldom more fitly chosen. The Khan sings only of what he knows, and his teachers are not hearsay and book-learning, but practical experience and Nature's open face.

The Khan lives alone in the house in which he was born, on his beautiful 250-acre Ontario farm. His garden—glorious in its unspoilt naturalness—has deep beds of jonquils and peonies which have blossomed undisturbed through sixty years. His gleaming narcissi were planted by his great-grandmother ninety years ago, and clambering briar roses that are everywhere around have bloomed through nearly a century. Lilac hedges that reach a height of thirty feet and a width of thirty-seven in places, first took root eighty-seven years ago.

* * *

"The Wigwam"—perhaps the best known little house in Canada—is the log cabin in which the Khan has done most of his writing. It stands far back from the road flanked by fifty acres of real Canadian bush where the clearer's axe has never cut a stick. Here in the summer nights he makes his verses and writes his daily column for the "Telegram." When nesting robins had built their home above the doorway, so that the place couldn't be entered without disturbing the mother and her tender brood, a distant window became the door for the kindly poet and philosopher. Not a bird about the place takes fright at his approach, squirrels and chipmunks run to him unafraid, and his Percheron colts follow him about like household pets.

* * *

Much more of a like nature might be told about the Khan and his manner of life, but his verses tell the story in a broader and a better way. For the Khan is a true son of Canada, and what he sings is felt in ten thousand Canadian hearts. What is common to him is common to them in essence, though in lesser degree. The song is his, but its harmonies are deep rooted in Canadian soil. None but a Canadian could have made the Khan's Book of Verse. Its texts are everyday happenings, everyday men and women, everyday duties, everyday joys and sorrows, and everyday pictures of Canadian life. Its laughter is wholesome and generous, there is no cynicism in its wrath, and its passion for what is beautiful, true, loyal and courageous is the spiritual reflex of Canada's glorious sunshine and her matchless azure skies.

THE KHAN'S BOOK OF VERSE

MEN OF THE NORTHERN ZONE

Oh, we are the men of the Northern Zone;
Shall a bit be placed in our mouth?
If ever a Northman lost his throne,
Did the conqueror come from the south?
Nay, nay—and the answer blent
In chorus is southward sent:
"Since when has a Southerner's conquering steel
Hewed out in the North a throne?
Since when has a Southerner placed his heel
On the men of the Northern Zone?"

Our hearts are as free as the rivers that flow
To the seas where the north star shines;
Our lives are as free as the breezes that blow
Thro' the crests of our native pines.
We never will bend the knee,
We'll always and aye be free,
For liberty reigns in the land of the leal,
Our brothers are 'round her throne;
A Southerner never shall place his heel
On the men of the Northern Zone.

Oh, shall we shatter our ancient name,
And lower our patriot crest;
And leave a heritage dark with shame,
To the infant upon the breast?

Nay, nay—and the answer blent
With a chorus is southward sent;
"Ye claim to be free—and so are we,
Let your fellow freemen alone;
For a Southerner never shall place his heel
On the men of the Northern Zone."

Shall the mothers that bore us bow the head
And blush for degenerate sons?
Are the patriot fires gone out and dead?
Ho! brothers stand to the guns!
Let the flag be nailed to the mast,
Defying the coming blast!
For Canada's sons are as true as steel,
Their metal and muscle and bone,
The Southerner never shall place his heel
On the men of the Northern Zone.

Oh, we are the men of the Northern Zone,
Where the maples their branches toss,
And Great Bear rides in his state alone,
Afar from the Southern Cross.
Our people shall aye be free,
They never will bend the knee,
For this is the land of the true and leal,
Where freedom is bred in the bone—
The Southerner never shall place his heel
On the men of the Northern Zone.

The Khan's Book of Verse

OUR SONGS

'Mid the murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Adown by the eastern sea;
'Mid the tapering tamaracs, tossing
Their wide arms wild and free;
Throbs the sound of our nation's music,
The startling slogans' ring;
An infant nation awakens,
And a people stands up to sing.

O wonderful congregation
That rises from reverent knee,
To sound the song of a nation
And chant the hymn of the free;
The song of the free is rolling
And booming between our coasts;
The chant of an infant people
Is led by the Lord of Hosts.

O wonderful congregation,
Who rise in their temple broad,
To thunder a freeman's anthem
Their fathers had learned from God.
The tapering tamaracs tremble;
The far-away prairies ring—
When the song of freedom is sounded
And a people stands up to sing.

Let traitors hark to the music;
Let rebels list to the song
That rolls, with the sound of laughter,
Our measureless coasts along.
Let the hills and fields of our nation
With our patriot anthem ring—
It's a glorious congregation
When a nation stands up to sing.

THE LAND OF THE LIVING

There be lands of the dead far over the sea,
Lands that are shadowed with woe,
Dead lands that we hear of far over the sea,
Where cold winds of pestilence blow;
I look all about me and hold up my head,
My spirit is glad with thanksgiving,
We're far, far away from the land of the dead,
For we live in the land of the living.

O come let us sing a new song to the Lord,
In a pasture field covered with snow,
The winter of God is a glorious sword,
That shields our great Eden from woe;
We have wheat, we have meat, we have bread and a bed,
We ne'er have a qualm of misgiving,
We're far, far away from the land of the dead,
For we live in the land of the living.

THE PIONEER'S ANTHEM

Our steps are growing feeble, our strength is failing fast;
We give a New Year's greeting and this may be the last.
Once we were strong of thought and thigh, once strong of thumb and thew,
Once we were an army; to-day we are but few.
The open grave's before us, the staff falls from each hand—
To our children's children and their children's children we do bequeath this land!

A land that's big with beauty, a land that's fair and free,
A land in sweet tranquillity, a land that's good to see.
Thriving towns and cities, smiling farms on every hand—
To our children's children and their children's children we do bequeath this land!

We came to build, and building, a mighty structure grew,
And ever as we builded, builded better than we knew;
And through the darkening wilderness, lo! we were led in might,
Our log heaps made a smoke by day, a pillared flame by night.
Now, when across the continent we've seen our task expand,
To our children's children and their children's children we do bequeath this land!

Our country, O our country, the triumph of our toil!
Unto her God we give our souls, our bodies to her soil.
Standing by our graveside, this is our last command:
For our children's children and their children's children
see that thou keep this land!

No more we'll feel the autumn leaves frosted 'neath
our feet;
No more we'll see our fields and hills begoldened with
the wheat;
No more we'll smell the apple bloom when spring is
here again;
No more we'll bring the milch cows home along the
darkening lane.
The battle time is over, and we must now disband—
To our children's children and their children's children
we do bequeath this land!

Lord, Thou who led'st us hither, still ever with us be!
Now lettest Thou Thy servants depart in peace to Thee!
Hear Thou our last weak prayer—we hold Thee by the
hand—
"For our children's children and their children's children,
O Lord God, keep this land!"

THE GOLDEN WEST

The star of empire takes its way
Towards the Golden West;
And millions follow in its wake,
The bravest and the best!

They leave the shores that fed them not,
Nor clothed their tender young;
They come to plant their myriad tents,
The prairie flowers among.

They turn their swords to ploughshares, and
Their spears to pruning hooks,
They come to lead their flocks and herds,
Beside our running brooks.

They come to till our waiting soil,
And break the stubborn sod;
They come to make their gardens in
This country of our God.

They'll build their mighty cities by
The wide and crystal lakes,
Nor cease till 'gainst the Rockies high
The tide of freedom breaks.

And he who starved in wretchedness
Beyond the distant sea,
Will, in our land of bounteousness,
A lord of nature be.

THE NEWER MOTHERLAND.

She is the newer Motherland, that old Ontario,
To whom our hearts when spring is near in fond remembrance go.
Altho' we crop a wider field and till a fresher loam,
The dear old country that we love, we'll ever call it Home!
We've kept the promise that we made, it was no idle brag,
We kept the Faith, we kept the Name, we kept the grand old flag.
"The flag that braved a thousand years the battles and the breeze,"
The flag of good Grandmother land afar "beyond the seas."

Great was our strong young Motherland, she sent her young sons forth,
She caught the Star of Empire and flung it blazing, North.
For just behind God's altar she found a secret door,
That never through the ages had open swung before.
It opened on a new-born land that made her bosom glad,
'Twas big to furnish splendid farms for every boy she had;
She sent us forth into the wilds, behind we heard her call,
"Remember, boys, you're British!" and 'twas "Yes, ma'am!" cried we all!

To-day we own the Pantry—the Larder of the earth,
And it was only yesterday us boys played 'round the hearth.
Our wheat goes forth to feed the world, a blessing and a boon,
Yet yesterday our Motherland did feed us with a spoon.
To-day we're rich and able to send the old folks help,
And that from land that yesterday rang with the she wolf's yelp.
We used to lean on others, now whenever there's a muss,
Grandmotherland and Motherland shall proudly lean on us!

If riding on a binder thro' wheat fields in the sun,
Or bounding through the fire zone on the caisson of a gun;
If horseback after cattle on the wide and breezy ranch,
Or galloping to battle like a living avalanche:
It's pretty much the same to us, so long as it is right,
When everything is running smooth we'd sooner eat than fight;
But if there comes a racket, and there's trouble down the street,
For Mother and Grandmotherland, we'd rather fight than eat!

MANITOBA

The blue and gold—the blue and gold expand,
They floor and roof this smiling, new-born land;
The wheat and sky so rich in hope and love,
The gold of God below, the blue above.

Behold ye now the fabled golden street,
Fit avenue for saints' and angels' feet;
Feel ye the west wind as it dances through,
Below, the gold of God; above, the blue.

Hark to the stamp of hoof, the roaring wheel,
'Mid blaze of color and the flash of steel!
Be these invaders that may fill with woe
The blue above—the golden streets below?

Not to the battle, but the harvest field,
The thund'rous binders come to reap the yield
Of frost and snow, of rain and sun and dew—
The tourney field below; above, the blue.

Hark to the merry noise—the joyous whirr
Of driving-wheel and roaring cylinder;
At night the camp-fires flush with ruddy glow
The blue above, the tinted wheat below.

God keeps His promise—He doth aye prevail;
Seed-time and harvest, they shall never fail.
Behold, the canvas that He doth unfold:
Above, the blue; below, the cloth of gold!

NORTH AND SOUTH

All sloppy with slime in a southern sea
A sickening saurian swims;
In a northland tree a chickadee
To his sweetheart is singing hymns.
Which is best: the cedars unrest
Where the windy winds do blow,
Or a dark lagoon 'neath a numbing noon,
Where the spotted lizards go?

All muddy with mire in a sweltering swale
The weedy turtles crawl,
But the northland crow, where the winds do blow,
Hath a cedar for a shawl.
Which is best: the hemlock's crest
That the roaring norther foils,
Or a loathsome log in a steamy bog
Where the sudden serpent coils?

In a murky stream, their scales agleam,
The alligators float;
But up in the north a song pours forth
From a happy tomtit's throat.
Which is best: the cedar's vest
That the Arctic frosts abate,
Or the muddy bath where, in all their wrath,
The crocodiles do wait?

A-wing on high in a southern sky
A vulture seeks the dead;
In the land of spruce the mighty moose
Seeks tit-bits overhead.
Which is best: the streamlet blest
Where the red deer come to drink,
Or the dark bayou which leaves no clue
Where the smothered cattle sink?

All sloppy with slime in a southern sea
A sickening saurian swims,
But the fish are nice where o'er the ice
The Temagami brims.
My home is North, where the pines stand forth
Benign, serene, and calm;
And I wouldn't trade my cedar glade
For the half of Alabam'!

ALONE.

Amid my trees so cherished and so dear,
Shawled by their shadows I am all alone,
Hither I come when not a soul is near,
To soothe my heartache and to make my moan;
I cannot wear my heart upon my sleeve,
For daws to peck at, this is what I fear;
So hither do I come in grief to grieve
Where not a soul can hear.

Hid by my trees and sentried by my birds,
I am translated to another earth,
Where none may see my tears or hear my words,
Nor scorch and wound me with unholy mirth.
Thus in this vast rotunda of the wood,
I am unsought, unfriended and alone,
Here in the shadows do I sit and brood,
Here do I make my moan.

To this cathedral pillared by my trees,
Whose organ chant wind-woven sobs and pleads,
I come by night and fall upon my knees
And here before the altar tell my beads;
And by my side doth lie my unsheathed sword,
My trowel on the other by a stone,
And here I cry aloud unto my Lord
When I am all alone.

Then thro' the forest aisles there comes surcease,
Some gentle hand doth free my heart from pain,
Ah! surely this must be the Prince of Peace,
Who hath the power to make me whole again.
My soul is glad, my tears have ceased to flow,
And when I've given thanks, I rise and then
I take my trowel and my sword, and go
Back to the haunts of men!

TEACH ME TO LAUGH AND PRAY

Now, with the coming year,
Two gifts, my friend, accord,
I think, indeed, I know, 'tis far too true,
I do not laugh nor pray enough, O Lord.

I think that he who laughs and prays is safe,
It matters not to him what's coming next;
Widow, wifeless, wanderer or waif,
By things that irritate he can't be vexed.

I don't laugh half enough, O Lord,
But scowls and frowns and heartaches o'er me drift;
Teach me to smile always and sometimes laugh,
And give it to me for a Christmas gift.

I've always thought that I would like to hear,
Not the tuned harps or clangor of the band,
But something better pouring thro' my ear—
The rich, deep, mellow laughter of that land.

Give me this priceless gift,
And give it to me on Your Own birthday;
And if you teach me how to laugh, O Lord,
I'll do my very best and learn to pray.

THE EMPTY SPACES

Let's people with people the peopleless places,
Let's fill them with cattle and men;
Let's baby with babies the babyless spaces,
And sweet little homesteads, and then
In beautiful schools we will school them with schooling,
And teach them their letters; and when
We've plenty of women without any fooling
You bet there'll be plenty of men!

Let's cradle with cradles the cradleless clay belt,
With hand-whittled bassinets, then
'Twill be known as the 'tater, the wheat and the hay belt,
And chock full of cattle and men.
Her daddy, I trow, will give you a cow
Along with his daughter, and then
He'll throw in some seed and a barrel of feed,
And maybe a rooster and hen.

Our friend Baptiste, of the greatest of races,
Will join us with gladness, and then
He'll peop with peops the peop'less places
And fill them with cattle and men.
The wilderness then will glow with new faces,
And dotted with villages, when
We people with people the peopleless places
And fill them with cattle and men.

THE OLD MAN DID

Who built them splendid buildin's,
Where grain an' hay are hid?
Who built that noble pigpen?
The ole man did.

Who built them bull-proof fences,
The pastur' fields amid?
Who cleared the cedar slashin'?
The ole man did.

Who built that noble mansion,
No mortgage for a lid?
Who planted out that orchard?
The ole man did.

He did it with affection,
It was his joy and pride,
And when his work was finished,
The ole man died.

THE YOUNG MAN DID.

Who let the homestead crumble,
The lilac trees amid?
Who wrecked the old verandah?
The young man did.

Who let the caterpillars
Erect their tents unbid,
And spoil the splendid orchard?
The young man did.

The big barn wide and tall,
From its foundations slid,
Who saw it slowly fall?
The young man did.

Who let the rascal ragweed
The fertile fields amid,
Destroy the wholesome clover?
The young man did.

Who with an awful mortgage
The noble acres hid?
An' who destroyed the sugar bush?
The young man did.

Who in his old Ford car
Went lickety skip and skid,
To ruin fast and far?
The young man did.

THE FALL FAIR

They are making preparations for the big fall fair,
And the farmer and his family are loaded up with care;
They are rubbin' down the geldin' and the big brood mare;
And the three-year-old is frisky—you ought to see him rear,
As they run him round the pasture when they've got an hour to spare.
They make him go full sail,
With red ribbons in his tail;
Yes, they're makin' preparations for the big fall fair.

They are combin' out the fleeces on the thoro'bred rams;
They are pickin' out the best of the pretty spring lambs.
The hired man is workin' on a wicker-work rig,
For the easy transportation of the pedigreed pig;
And the boys are all constructin' the cutest little pens
For the safety and the comfort of the Vere de Vere hens.
The 'ristocratic bull
With turnip tops is full—
It'll make a great sensation at the big fall fair.

They are makin' preparations for the big fall fair,
There is very much excitement in the circumambient air;
Each farmer has a pumpkin that can't be beat, b'gosh,
And everybody stands to win upon a certain squash;

Not to mention barley, wheat and oats, and buckwheat,
corn and peas,
And the products of the vine and the harvest of the trees;
While I hear the housewife mutter,
"They'll never beat that butter!"
Yes, they're makin' preparations for the great fall fair.

They are makin' preparations for the big fall fair,
In the barnyard, in the kitchen, down cellar, everywhere.
The currycomb is goin' and the brush is never still,
And the girls are makin' butter with a flourish and a will.
They are glancin' at the wall, where diplomas in a
frame—
The triumphs of the past—are a glory and a name.
Before each eye arises
The vision of big prizes;
Yes, they're makin' preparations for the big fall fair.

MORNING ON THE FARM

Afar the coming steeds of day
Are shaking out their manes of grey,
And thro' the clouds of sullen dun
The gleaming threads of silver run;
The distant woods seem creeping near,
The morning star shines, cold and clear;
The rooster loud his signal sounds,
The house dog from his kennel bounds;
The steaming pigs forsake the stacks,
With piles of chaff upon their backs;
The milk cows hear the cheerful call,
And each one rises in her stall;
For pleasant sleep they moo their thanks,
Then shake themselves, and lick their flanks;
And all, a tip-toe, silent wait
To hear the hired man at the gate—
To hear him move the sliding bar
That leads to where the turnips are.
The handsome gelding pricks an ear—
He knows that feeding time is near;
He knows that morn is almost here.

The blinking pullets stretch and yawn,
And hail the herald of the dawn;
They hear with joy the bugle calls,
Awake! along the henhouse walls
They watch the timid steps of day—
First, the chilly dun and grey,
Next, a shade of muffled blue,
With tufts of yellow shining through;
The waking sparrows fight outside,
The timid stars their faces hide,

And still along the henhouse walls
The modest morning careful crawls;
And soon the soft and paling blue
Is changing to a saffron hue,
Then thro' the cobwebbed window flows
A glorious flood of pink and rose;
Then comes a rush of liquid gold,
And morning o'er the earth is rolled—
The cock complacent, with a yawn,
Winds up his watch, for this is Dawn.

His call is heard in every home
Beneath the Winter's starry dome;
The baby in its blanket warm
Turns softly on its mother's arm;
A tremor curves its parted lips,
And stirs its wee pink finger tips—
No longer motionless it lies,
But opens up its dewy eyes,
And watches, wond'ring, at the walls
Where maiden morning creeps and crawls;
First the dark, and then the dun,
Next gusts of cloudy cobalt run,
Then breaths of blue and tender rose,
A wave of crimson inward flows;
The shifting picture doth unfold
Its charming polka dots of gold;
The baby claps its hands with glee,
And wakes its mamma up to see!

A NIGHT IN JUNE

The whip-poor-will out in the cedars
Shouts his ventriloquial song,
And the cock crane hid in the hollow
Beats on his sonorous gong,
And the fire-flies down by the mill dam,
Sink in the grass in a swoon;
The crickets, the tree toads, the night hawks,
Croon, ejaculate, croon,
And the cows trail home from the pasture
On a beautiful night in June.

The hen cluckles under the wagon,
As she hides her chickens small,
And the bulltoad, portly and happy,
Hops out from the weedy wall;
See the farmer's dog at the rain trough,
Threatens the far away coon;
The crickets, the night jars, the goslings,
Croon, ejaculate, whisper,
Whisper, ejaculate, croon;
And somebody steals to the garden gate
On a beautiful night in June.

And somebody tells her a story
There under the locust tree;
'Tis somebody handsome and manly,
'Tis somebody fair to see,
And he clasps her hand in the shadows
Cast by the motherly moon,
And the crickets, the treetoads, the goslings,
Croon, ejaculate, whisper,
Whisper, ejaculate, croon—
How many such stories are told these nights,
These wonderful nights in June?

SUPPER'S READY

Who is the girl I love the best?
She with the pillared neck of snow?
She with hands that never rest
And never labor? Ah, no, no!
The girl I love lifts up her hands,
And in the kitchen door she stands,
And o'er the meadows and the fields
Her rich and splendid anthem peals—
"Supper's ready."

The horses halt and slack their traces,
The weary workers lift their heads,
Light is on the hired men's faces
As through the fields the anthem spreads,
The brown faced girl I love is standing
Tiptoed on the kitchen landing;
She cannot cry nor call in vain,
Her sounding voice rings down the lane—
"Supper's ready."

The horses drink, the cattle stare,
And wonder at the curious plan,
The plough is stopped and in the air
I hear the jokeful hired man;
But on the porch, with face of brown,
Sunburned hands and modest gown,
She startles all the fields with this—
'Tis sweeter than a woman's kiss—
"Supper's ready."

THE WAUBIGOON

The Waubigoon! The Waubigoon!
Three red men near it sat and sang,
While past their feet the Waubigoon
Above the sparkling pebbles rang.

Ah, they were Indians old and grey,
Robed in the skins of bear and coon,
That they had slain in days of yore
When hunting on the Waubigoon.

"Alas! We'll hunt no more, no more,"
The feeblest chieftain cried, "for soon
We'll pass into the spirit land
And see no more the Waubigoon.

"No more we'll lay us down to rest
Nor hide us from the heated noon
Upon thy shady banks of green—
Thy reedy banks, O Waubigoon.

"No more within the silent night,
When lofty floats the chilly moon,
We'll watch the deer come down to drink
Thy sacred waters, Waubigoon.

"O Waubigoon, we know that life
Is gone for us; we feel that thou
Must be the holy stream that feeds
The heart of our great Manitou.

"How sweet to ride in birch canoe
That, anchored yonder, frets and bounds,
And painless float upon thy breast
Into the happy hunting grounds.

"Grant this, O Waubigoon, we pray,
O grant to us this simple boon,
The only winding sheet we ask
Is thy loved waters, Waubigoon.

"We wish to live no more, no more;
We wish to see no other noon,
Three chiefs yield up their lives to thee,
Thou chief of waters, Waubigoon."

He spoke his last, and as he ceased
His comrades caught the frail canoe,
The three grey chieftains entered in
And down the fleeting waters flew.

And they have never since been seen,
From that bright August day till now;
Their people know that they are gone,
To dwell with mighty Manitou.

And when the stars are draped in black;
And all extinguished is the moon,
A ghostly boat is seen to float
Adown the secret Waubigoon;

And in the darkness you may hear
Three spirit voices softly croon,
"We loved in life—we love in death,
Thy sacred waters, Waubigoon."

'SCUSE ME!

I hear I've got to preach tomorrer,
Our pastor he be orfil ill;
An' Deacon Smith, I larn with sorrer,
His lung it be bleedin' still,
I've prayed at funerals an' sich,
An' at camp meetings tuk a hitch,
But still I never preached before;
If any party yells "Angcore,"
By the holy Mos—'scuse me!

At 'ligion I make no pretext,
I never went a-seekin' lambs,
I hain't achose no reg'lar text,
I'll kinder ramble round the Psalms.
I'll do it right—I'll take my perch,
I'll hev no snickerin' in the church;
An' I will thump the man, d'ye see,
Who heaves a hickory nut at me!
By the holy Mo—'scuse me!

Gimme a chaw—thanks—Miss Brown'll lead
The choir as usual—gimme a match—
An' all that troo believers need
To do is come and lift the latch.
This painful duty I've to do,
The pastor he hez arsked me to;
But if some funny chap, d'ye see,
Shud heave a nest egg up at me,
By the holy Mo—'scuse me.

The wimmen they will sit on one,
The gents upon the other side;
And I will keep my eyes upon
The one who tries to act up snide.
I'll sing a bass to every Psalm,
An' run the service cool an' calm,
But look ahere, my friends, d'ye see,
If someone hollers "Rats" at me,
By the holy Moses—hum—'scuse me!

THE OLD FARM FAR AWAY

I wonder if the sheep are huddling
Beside the sheltering stacks,
And are the yearlings cuddling
With hoar frost on their backs?
And are the wild leaves straying
The orchard fences through,
In rustling eddies playing,
Just as they used to do?

And is the blue ice shining
Upon the swimming hole?
And is my muskrat dining
Upon his willow roll?
And, following their leaders,
Do swift crows swim the blue
To find the sheltering cedars,
Just as they used to do?

Are noisy bluejays calling
Along the old fence rails?
Are frostbit' apples falling
To tempt the cottontails?
And do the foxes wander
And wandering leave a clue
Upon the snow fields yonder,
Just as they used to do?

Are Tom and Archie hauling
Their store of winter wood?
Are geese for Christmas squalling
And squabbling for their food?
And is the bright air tingling,
Do prisms flash in view?
And are the sleigh-bells jingling,
Just as they used to do?

And is the kitchen cosy?
Do old-time comforts cling?
And is the bright grate rosy?
And does the kettle sing?
And is the firelight beaming
On kindly faces true?
And are the old folks dreaming
Just as they used to do?

I'd love to be among them,
The good old folks to please,
To hear the anthems sung them
By pines and chickadees.
Ah, how my soul rejoices
Far off to get a view,
And listen to their voices,
As once I used to do!

THE GOLD OF GOD

The royal hill was calm and still
And the silent angels slept,
Till all alone to the golden throne
A wee, wee baby crept.
Ah! its little feet were pink and sweet,
Its steps were all unsteady;
Yet its little voice made heaven rejoice;
"Lo! the golden wheat is ready!"

"The wheat is ready," rang around
The steps of the golden throne;
The angels all their scythes unbound
In a world that was all their own;
And the beautiful baby crept along
With lips like a golden pod;
The harvest was brief, yet it slept on a sheaf,
On the glorious gifts of God.

Look for a dollar and find it, please,
Down in the dusty street;
Then look in the billowed and splendid seas
Where the sweet wind wipes the wheat.
There's where the angels have come to-night,
There's where the baby sings;
And all's afire with a spark of light
From a big Archangel's wings.

So the story is told by a baby wee
With a mouth like a golden pod—
A sheaf is a splendid angel's knee—
It sleeps in the lap of God.

East and west, and north and south,
Angel! whither away?
Will the beautiful autumn fill the mouth
Of the winter's hungered day?
Yes, out of the field the promise wings
That the wee, wee babe is right;
The yellow harvest sobs and sings
As the white days take their flight.

So the baby lives without mishap,
And its lips, a ripened pod,
Are pursed in the rich and the yellow lap
Of the golden gift of God.

WHERE THE DAFFYDOWNDILLIES GROW

Dear little girl, you must hear my call,
You must let my plea prevail,
Your dear little hands are thin and small,
And, darling, your cheeks are pale;
Let's walk together and take the air
Where the May-time breezes blow,
And hand in hand we will wander where
The daffydowndillies grow.

We'll pass beneath our trysting tree,
Where first our love befell;
We'll pluck the early violets, we
Shall scent the woodsey smell;
The bright marsh-marigolds are there,
They glitter, glint and glow,
We'll spend our happy May day where
The daffydowndillies grow.

The small grey bird in the brush below,
And the lofting lark above,
They sing a song we both do know,
"I love my lovely love!"
The ladybirds are listening there,
And each doth choose her beau,
Like them we'll seek the copses where
The daffydowndillies grow.

Harken to the song and—hush-sh-h!
Now let's go warily,
There's someone hiding in the brush
Who ever can it be?
'Tis Cupid! he is skulking there,
Prepared to draw his bow,
We'll give him a chance to hit us where
The daffydowndillies grow.

THE WINGS.

Hark to the whistling wings!
The feathered and beautiful things.
With a rush they come forth
From the snow-blinded north
With a stroke of the whistling wings.
The feathered, the beautiful things,
With a throb and a thunder of wings.

'Mid the snow and the sleet
I see ducks in a fleet,
And I hear their wonderful wings,
The rush of their whistling wings.
At night there's no peace,
For I hear the wild geese
The throb of their thunderous wings,
Their wide, wind-walloping wings.
Oh, I hail with delight
In the dark of the night
The rush of their sonorous wings!

For a moment high over
The marshes they hover
On anthemed, wide circling wings,
Beating the sky with their wings.
They would rest till the dawn,
But the gander cries "On!"
To his noisy high-harem he clings,
The graceful, the grey feathered things,
Fain would they stay,
But he leads them away,
With a thunderous rush of wide wings,
With a rush of wind-walloping wings.

SUMMERING ON THE FARM

At four o'clock in the forenoon I
Arise from my virtuous couch,
Just when the day has opened her eye,
When the beautiful grasses are far from dry,
When the liquid dew is thick on the rye,
Till I'm wet to the ears or nearly as high,
Away for the cows I slouch.
Homeward I lead the heifers coy,
With a pleasure I fancy that never will cloy,
But with milk hands I do not employ,
For a crack on the jaw from a cow's hind claw
Is a thing that I don't enjoy.

At five o'clock in the forenoon I
Sit down to the breakfast spread,
In order to fit my form for work,
I rastle with ham and struggle with pork,
And in gravy I soak my bread.
The pig for the rural palate is slain,
I know that at noon I will see him plain,
At lunch he will probably bob up again,
At supper I'll look for him not in vain,
And he'll follow me into bed.
When I lie on my back and dream, I feel
His smokehouse breath and hear him squeal,
Till I raise the house by dancing a jig,
And yelling "The pig, the pig, the pig!"
An exercise certainly rather warm,
But it's most of the fun on a farm.

At six o'clock in the forenoon I
Am off to the field, ahoy!
I follow the binder round and round,
Picking up sheaves from off the ground,
Till my soul is filled with joy,
I set them up in little piles,
In Gothic, Norman and Queen Anne styles,
The approving farmer looks and smiles
And whistles "The Farmer's Boy."
I hustle along with all my might,
The pay aint big, and the work aint light,
The harvest sun is hot and bright,
And I'm wet with sweat and an awful fright,
And I pray in my heart for the night.

At seven o'clock in the forenoon I
Am "bushed" as the farmers say;
They tote me home in an old hayrack,
An ache in my head and a pain in my back,
And punctured with thistles gray;
I go to the cellar and sit in the cool,
I drink sour milk and feel like a fool
As I think of the "Perfect Day;"
And I solemnly swear by the Great Black Bat
That I'm done with gravy and pork and fat,
And second-hand 'taters warm;
And I say with a grin as I empty a crock,
The winter's the time to write and talk
Of summering on the farm.

I GO TO MEET THE SUN

The hand of God flings far the lariat,
And hurls the world beneath me down thro' space;
And tireless earth, behold, it is my chariot,
The swiftest ever entered in a race.
Whither am I going? Thro' darkness yawning,
Thro' an abyss all vaporous and dun,
I ride my chariot to greet the dawning,
I go to meet the sun.

The wheels are noiseless on the soundless highway,
No culverts span the road down which I ride,
Not even shadows fall across the skyway,
As thro' the solemn silences I glide.
There are no headlights flashing forth to blind me,
No semaphores to guide me as I run,
I leave all panic and all fear behind me,
I go to meet the sun.

I ride thro' space, the stars alone can span it,
Lo! Jupiter is sinking in the west;
And I alone upon this mighty planet,
Where are the others, where are all the rest?
Down thro' the darkness where the night is deepest,
A black abyss the very meteors shun;
Upon my hill I cry, "Wake, thou that sleepest,
We go to meet the sun."

Swift tho' it be, my chariot moves sedately,
No racing comet can outrace the speed she hath,
Lo! she is silent, dignified, and stately,
She knows her way along the appointed path,
I love not darkness, this great planet turning
Shall never halt till her bright goal is won,
And I shall see for what my soul is yearning—
I shall behold the sun.

We rush along the way secure and certain;
'Tis morning clinging to the skirts of night,
And God himself doth draw aside the curtain,
And I behold the light, the blessed light!
A splendid spectacle beyond all naming,
Let all men hear! there is no God but one!
There in the radiant east, in glory flaming,
Lo! I behold the sun!

GRAND OLD MUSIC

'Tis my delight on a winter's night,
When frost the world's encrusting,
To hear the crack behind the shack,
Of big rain barrels busting.

'Tis many a year since I did hear,
To memory I'm trusting,
The thund'rous roar outside the door
Of big rain barrels busting.

When frost did freeze and the winter breeze
Was clamorous and gusting,
Like the sounds of doom we heard the boom
Of big rain barrels busting.

We knew for facts the almanacs
Could never quite be trusted,
But we knew then 'twas winter when
The big rain barrels busted!

THIS IS SPRING

A rush of sunlight o'er the way,
A cry of wild birds in the park,
A glow of golden light by day,
A field of blazing stars at dark—
Among the trees, along the grass,
The songs of joyous robins ring;
And as the splendid moments pass,
The world cries out, "So this is spring!"

To-day my heart is like a dart
That's feathered with an eagle's plume,
And rises from the dark apart
To reach the sunlight from the gloom;
Unfettered are the waters wide,
The lakelets laugh, the rivers sing;
No matter what the hours betide,
I only know that this is spring.

Spring is hope—and hope is God!
Without it nothing lives or breathes;
It speaks—behold the daisied sod,
The tree is glad, the water seethes;
The crows go winding Northward ho!
The cranes across the marshes swing,
The bullfrogs croak where sedges grow,
And then I know that this is spring.

KISS HER EVERY DAY

Reader, have you got a wife?
Kiss her every day.
'Tis the duty of your life
To kiss her every day.
Tell her that the world is graced
By such as she, the true, the chaste;
Then put your arm around her waist,
And kiss her every day.

Tell her that she's growing prettier
Every dawning day;
Dearer, nearer, wiser, wittier—
Kiss her every day.
Many lives are graveward carried,
Wounded, bruised, and hurt and harried,
Courting ceased when they were married—
Often that's the way.

Tell your wife how much you'd miss her
If she went away;
Take her in your arms and kiss her
Many times a day.
Tell her she's your life and crown,
Never leave her with a frown,
Keep your ugly temper down,
And kiss her every day.

Winter, summer, rain or shine,
Never sulk or blame;
Spring or autumn, never whine,
For your own good name;
Sometimes she'll be cross and cold,
Never mind, she's good as gold—
Let her have her little scold,
And kiss her just the same.

When there's something wrong with baby,
Kiss her every day,
'Twill help to soothe her worry, may be—
Kiss her every day.
Kiss her when her soul is sad,
Kiss her when her heart is glad;
Be your fortune good or bad,
Kiss her every day.

THE PEW FOR YOU

I didn't know she loved me till
A moment ere the church went in,
It almost made my heart stand still,
I heard her thro' the bells' loud din;
"How d'ye do?
There's room for you
In Father's pew."

The chants were fine, the hymns were great,
The curate read the lessons well,
And there I sat with heart elate,
And heard one single anthem swell;
"How d'ye do?
There's room for you,
In Father's pew."

I sensed her gown against my hand,
I felt her breath against my cheek,
All things were holy, rich and grand,
The reason why—not far to seek;
"How d'ye do,
There's room for you,
In Father's pew."

In years gone by the bells might clang,
In vain the noblest music roll,
Last night the little songs she sang
Have saved my future and my soul;
"How d'ye do,
There's room for you,
In Father's pew."

And should she die before I do,
She'll meet me on the golden stair,
The little girl I used to woo,
She'll smile and say, so debonnaire;
"How'd d'ye do,
There's room for you
In Father's pew."

You seek for Cupid, brother mine?
Take my advice, your journey's o'er,
Go seek him in the nearest shrine,
For Cupid is a great church-goer!
"How d'ye do?
There's room for you,
In Father's pew."

OUR DREAMS COME TRUE

"And they said, Behold this dreamer cometh."—The Bible
"When the Lord turned away the captivity of Zion we were like them that dream."—King David.
"We are such stuff as dreams are made on."—Shakespeare.

The dreaming Dreamers dreamed their dreams and died,
And never saw fruition of their hopes;
They saw no roses in their deserts wide,
No vineyards clinging to the stoney slopes.
And now their bones are dust, they never knew,
That all their dreams came true.

O Dreamer, I am standing by the bed,
The weedstrewn bed that also is my grave,
I bring a message to the glorious dead,
O hearken to me—listen well, I crave;
This is the message that I bring to you,
That all your dreams came true.

You died unsung, but dreaming to the last,
You told the world your dreams, she cried "Absurd!"
But o'er it all an angel blew a blast,
Which never reached you—which you never heard.
O Dreamer, list not to the ribald crew,
Your dreams shall all come true.

And when you reached the gates you saw far set,
A legend bright in flaming words of fire,

It swung from minaret to minaret,
From dome to dome, from dizzy spire to spire;
Across the roofs of heaven this greeting flew,
"Your dreams shall all come true."

And when you passed the portals in the streets,
The Dreamers, dead this long ten thousand years,
Hailed you in triumph standing on their seats,
And cried you welcome 'mid their smiles and tears.
Their welcomes fell like tinkling bells of dew,
"Lo! all your dreams came true!"

You did not have to wait while ages roll,
Their weary lengths along till that dread morn,
When o'er the fog, upon a glist'ning knoll,
A tuneful Angel blows his waking horn;
I, too, shall know, at last, what you long knew,
That all our dreams come true!

SOME DAY

I'm disgusted with you, really,
You are all over dirt;
You are squally and you're squeaky,
You are bashful and you're pert.
But the future I can see,
It ain't so far away;
It's comforting to me—
You'll be winsome, you'll be a darling, a precious little woman some day.

But you're all over mud,
And your skinny legs are bare,
And you sit and chew your cud—
Ah! what do you care!
But some day soon—
This is only May—
Hearken to the moon:
You'll be a lovely, precious, dainty little woman, some day.

But you're all over dirt—
Tell the truth, you've got my goat—
And your father's cast-off shirt
Doesn't make a petticoat!
Nevertheless, my sweet,
Before this world is gray,
You will be complete,
A tremendous, a stupendous, a most precious little woman, some day!

O thou
Little freckled thing!
Even now
Thou'rt fit for a king.
Sweetheart, come out of the dirt,
Quit guzzling your crust and whey;
Clean yourself—shake your shirt—
For you'll be a most splendid and absurd, a kissable woman, some day.

Little ragged waif,
Little throneless queen,
I will hold thee safe,
Hell and heaven between.
Why? I'll tell thee why;
To thee this thing I'll say:
Thou shalt be the Idol's Eye,
A beautiful, tantalizing, darling, precious little woman, some day.

And I will pray
That ever the Lord will be
Thy comrade on the way,
Soul-company for thee.
May every care enfold thee.
Ever by night and day!
May the wonderful Sculptor mould thee
Into a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful girl, some day!

THE LITTLE HILL BEYANT

Musha, in thirty-six
Didn't I come over here
From the land of cuffs and kicks,
Where a pound uv flour was dear?
I see me hardy sons,
Their homes around me plant,
But me heart is far away
On a little hill beyant.

Musha, man, listen to me!
Weren't we ground an' dhriv?
Sorra a sowl could sue me,
For I hadn't enough to live.
Now I've three hundred acres—
Sue me? Well, they can't.
But me heart is far away
On a little hill beyant.

On a little green-topped hill,
Where soft cloud shadows fall,
Where sunbeams dhrink their fill
An' a blue sky over all.
Me mother's bones are there,
'Neath Ireland's three-leafed plant,
Safe from all toil an' care,
On the little hill beyant.

No heathen urn nor shaft
Is planted on her grave,
But the symbol—often laughed
To scorn—stands true and brave;
An' the aged priest comes oft
To pluck old Erin's plant,
An' the vesper bell sounds soft
On the little hill beyant.

Arrah, listen to me, dear!
This is a land of wheat;
Men don't go hungry here,
Nor childer cry for meat.
Yon was a land of tears,
The table was ever scant,
But me heart stayed all these years
On the little hill beyant.

Whisht! Yer granddad's dyin'!
Let all his childer grieve;
Outside the banshee's cryin'
An' this 's New Year eve.
Wake up, granddad—wake!
Wake him! Och, we can't!
For he's gone back to Erin
An' the little hill beyant!

A SHOVELFUL OF SOIL

He stood beside his plough,
The horny-handed son of toil,
Trying to unfold
The wonder of the mould
In a shovelful of soil.

No wonder it perplexes,
And the troubling problem vexes,
The horny-handed son of toil;
For the onion gets its flavor,
And the rhubarb gets its savour,
The ragweed will be growing,
Where the golden wheat is glowing,
In the same shovelful of soil!

Such things as that must worry,
The horny-handed sons of toil,
The poison ivy stern
Grows right beside the fern,
In the same shovelful of soil.

Ah! 'tis enough to flurry,
The horny-handed sons of toil;
Beside the queenly rose
The horrid burdock grows,
In the same shovelful of soil.

No wonder that he ponders
As o'er the land he wanders,

This horny-handed son of toil,
For underneath his feet,
Like twins grow tares and wheat,
Underneath earth's lid.
Life and death lie hid,
In a shovelful of soil.

Puzzled thou, I wis,
Lo, I will tell thee this,
O horny-handed son of toil;
The ashes of the dead,
Since sun and earth were wed,
King, clown, thro' every age,
The assassin and the sage,
Their shanties and their thrones,
Their blood, their brains, their bones,
Are in that shovelful of soil.

Oh, I would like to know
When we from earth shall go,
O horny-handed son of toil,
What from our dust shall spring;
Some sweet and useful thing?
Wheat, when bread is scant?
A poison ivy plant?
A rose with love to plead?
A vile, indecent weed?
Ah! I would like to know
What thou and I shall grow,
O horny-handed son of toil,
In our shovelful of soil.

THE JANUARY THAW! HAW! HAW!

Oh, you can all recall,
We had a lovely fall,
The sweetest autumn weather you ever saw, haw, haw!
And now to fill the measure,
With pleasure comes a treasure,
A pretty little January thaw, haw, haw!

And you can well remember,
That all thro' last December,
The dainty little crows did caw, haw, haw,
And now to fill our cup,
With something sweet to sup.
'Long comes a January thaw, haw, haw!

And all thro' last November,
'Twas as mild as was September,
And the breezes, gentle breezes, weren't raw, haw, haw,
And now just look who's here,
A nifty little dear,
A nobby little January thaw, haw, haw!

I saw a hillside tryin'
For to grow a dandelion,
And a muskrat digging rootlets with his paw, haw, haw,
A field mouse cried, "It's spring!"
Her ma said, "No such thing,
It's just a lovely January thaw, haw, haw!"

If it lasts another day
The hens will start to lay,
And you'll hear them cackling gaily in the straw, haw, haw.
The ducks they are not sad,
And the gander he is glad,
Because we've got a January thaw, haw, haw!

Oh, 'tis a lovely world,
With joys it is impearled,
And it hasn't got a blemish or a flaw, haw, haw.
I admit that summer's fine,
But give me a genuine,
A good old-fashioned January thaw, haw, haw!

IT RAINS BY NIGHT

With water roofs are streaming,
The wide wet street is gleaming,
I hear the panick'l patter of ten thousand hasty feet;
And yonder swaying light
Fills the corridors at night,
With pixy pictures on the ponds that pool the purling street.

And o'er my head up yonder,
The ghostly nighthawks wander,
I hear them calling, calling to each other in the dark;
I know that at the flood,
All night over head they stood;
'Twas only in the daytime that they ever used the ark.

Far off in the fields beyond,
And in the streaming weals beyond,
The sodden cattle hump their backs and wait the tardy dawn;
But happy ducks are throating
Their joyousness while floating
In safety in the marshes, while the rainy rains rain on.

I thank the Lord I'm not a stray,
As homeward bound I wend my way,
I thank Him for the shelter as between the sheets I creep,
And His raindrops on the roof,
Each a little fairy hoof,
Will dance, advance, will glance and prance and lull me into sleep.

THE GRASS-GREEN GRASS

Oh! they talk about the green of the hemlock and the spruce,
And the rich dark green of the pine,
And they blow about the green of the cedar and the fir,
But the sweet grass-green for mine.
Oh! they haven't got the color and they haven't got the sheen,
Of the sweet, green grass-green green.

You have heard the fir bewailing in the tempest and the snow,
You have heard the deep complaining of the pine,
You have heard the cedars moaning down in the low-lands low,
Oh! the green, green grass for mine.
But you've heard the grasses laughing in the summer time, I ween,
The green, green, grass-green green.

Oh! the grass-green green is a glad and gleeful green,
And it dances to the music of a lute,
And it marches to a great pipe organ and a horn,
And the great god Pan plays the flute;
Oh! the goblins and the fairies in the moonlight may be seen,
Dancing with the grass-green green.

Oh! I'm yearning for the spring and I'm longing for the May,
Mine eyes are weary looking at the snow,
But soon the flutes will sing, the drifts will flee away,
And the grass-green grass will grow.
The grass-green green, sweeter color hath not been,
The sweet green, grass-green green.

THE WHEEL

This morn I saw the hoar frost white, it silvered yonder knoll,
Why art thou so disquieted within me, O my soul?
The wheel of God doth stately turn, its far and lofty tire
Doth strike like steel against the stars and sets them all on fire;
The wheel of God hath mighty spokes, yes, there be twelve of them,
Of silver six, and six of gold, all bright with many a gem.
The wheel turns round and round, and round the spokes majestic go,
Is one spoke than another spoke more beautiful? Ah, no!

This noon I heard a hurricane beat on an icy shoal,
Why art thou so disquieted within me, O my soul?
Behold and see a splendid sight, a sight to glad thine eye,
A silver spoke inlaid with gold is standing in the sky;
Each comes in his appointed hour, the twelve apostles march,
And on their mighty shoulders rests the high celestial arch.
The twelve apostles come and go, a noble band they are,
And not a Judas in the twelve, not even Januwar.

This morn I saw the summer season rolled up like a scroll,
Why art thou so disquieted within me, O my soul?

Beloved, if this spoke stood still for ever and a day,
Then might'st thou weep and weep and wail and beat
thy breast and play;
But no, another spoke shall rise when this great spoke
shall go,
'Twill shake down on the earth beneath its antiseptic
snow,
Striking down the foes of men with germ-destroyed ice,
Be still, my soul, remember that this is God's device.
So though thou saw'st the hoar frost white a-silvering
yonder knoll,
Though thou heard'st a hurricane beat on a far-off shoal,
And though thou saw'st the summer season rolled up
like a scroll,
Do not be so disquieted within me, O my soul!

THE LADIES OF THE LAKE?

"Oh, the best time of the year,"
Said the tugboat to the barge,
"Is when the ports are clear,
And the stars are shining large.
When the swarming gulls prevail,
When the happy sailors shout,
When the chinook fills the sail,
And the ice goes out!"

Oh, the Ladies of the Lake
They are tethered to the dock,
All night they stay awake,
Listening for the shock,
Of the bursting of the bonds
That puts the cold to rout;
They are waiting there like swans,
Till the ice goes out.

And the ferry boats they croak,
"We are tethered to the wharf,
We'd like to trail our smoke
Like a big black scarf;
They are tinkering with our irons,
They are slashing paint about,
O, soon you'll hear our sirens,
When the ice goes out."

And the modest wee canoe,
The dainty little thing,
She whispered "How de do?
Oh, hail with me the Spring!"
She's trying to be gay,
She hides a little pout,
She's longing for the day
When the ice goes out.

Ah, we'll be cold in death,
Like this frozen little ship,
We'll die for want of breath,
A stroke, perhaps the grip,
Or hardening of the liver,
Consumption or the gout;
But we'll all float down the river
When the ice goes out.

THE LADY OF THE LILACS

And thou hast left me, mother, thou art questing
Afar in lands where promised mansions are,
Oh! choose a little cottage sweetly nesting
Deep in an orchard from the city far.
Lo! thou hast left thy lilacs all behind thee,
The lilacs that you planted long ago,
But when I seek thee, mother dear, I'll find thee,
Where many, many, many lilacs blow.

Oh! I will question all the watchful wardens,
Who keep the boundaries of that far-off star,
And I will ask the keeper of the gardens,
"Pray tell me where the lady lilacs are."
And he will walk with me, the way beguiling,
And I will know the one I love is near,
When at a gate an angel beckons, smiling,
"You seek your mother? Lo! she dwelleth here."

Oh! mother dear, when but a child you brought me,
A-through the portals of an earthly shrine,
And every evening at your knee you taught me,
That restful faith in God that now is mine;
Oh! if I thought that ne'er again I'd greet thee,
In brighter, better, higher worlds somewhere,
Oh! if I thought that ne'er again I'd meet thee,
This world would gloom with drear and dark despair.

Dear mem'ries in this vacant room are clinging,
'Mid faint far echoes of an old-time mirth,
Now I remember how you filled with singing
The little heaven you made for me on earth;
I will not tire thee, mother, with the telling
Of that sweet heaven you made on earth for me,
For oh! I know to-night that thou art dwelling
In that dear heaven our Saviour made for thee.

A dark despair, a hopeless grief would sear me,
If ne'er again I'd feel your touch and thrill,
But somehow, dear, I feel that thou art near me,
Your bowered home is just beyond a hill;
And every evening when the dew is falling,
O planter of my lilacs, well I know,
'Tis thy dear voice I hear afar off calling:
"Seek me where everlasting lilacs glow."

TOO MUCH LIBERTY

If you get upon your legs in hope to start a new reform,
And bravely pull your coat off, reformation to begin;
"The Liberty of the Subject" will raise an awful storm,
And the crowd that's all around you will ring the chestnut in.

If you want to curb the vices and the passions of the age,
And smash the ugly idols of the heathen and the bad;
The crowd will roar of "Liberty" and fly into a rage
And claim the same old idols that their tart ancestors had.

We've got a splendid climate, and our soil is very good,
I'm filled with honest hopeful pride as I watch my country grow;
We've got enough of things to wear, and plenty wholesome food;
But we've got too much of Freedom to the acre, don't you know?

WHEN I GO HOME TO-NIGHT

When I go home a light will be
Upon the old verandah rail;
The dog will bark, and I will see
The welcome in his friendly tail.
I'll enter thro' the open door,
I'll hark to hear the hired man snore;
I'll seek for apple pie in store,
When I go home to-night.

Behold the loaf of home-made bread;
The dew upon the salad shines;
Behold the snowy feather bed
Beside the window dark with vines.
The old-time pictures on the wall
Will smile, and smiling, me enthrall;
I'll hear familiar night-birds call,
When I go home to-night.

When I go home to-night, the horse
Behind the barn will say me "Neigh!"
I'll go to see the pigs, of course,
And count the cattle o'er the way;
I'll plan to meet the chipmunk cute—
The rascal knows I never shoot—
I'll hark to hear the kildeer toot,
When I go home to-night.

When I go home to-night a calm
Will settle down upon my life;
The lilac leaves will chant a psalm
To hush away the worldly strife;
And in the morn, no whistles deep,
Nor trolley bells will bedlam keep,
And I will sleep—and—sleep—and sleep—
When I go home to-night.

THE GENESIS OF A SOUL

When I crawl and creep in the withered grass,
And, hid among rocks, I lie;
When my nimble tongue is as smooth as glass,
And I hiss at the passer-by;
When I crawl along in the shaded brake
With sinuous motion, slow;
I know that my soul was the soul of a snake—
Ten thousand years ago.

But when I wing my way aloft,
And float with the clouds on high,
When I dip my wings in the azure soft,
And nations 'neath me lie;
When thunder voices beneath me roll,
And lightnings come and go,
I know that my soul was an eagle's soul—
Nine thousand years ago.

And when I long for fever beds,
On banks of slime and mud,
Where saurians rear their hideous heads
On the brink of the sullen flood;
When I moan for the mud of a night-time Nile,
Or deep morass, I know
My soul was the soul of a crocodile—
Six thousand years ago.

But when my heart is light and gay,
And longs for meadows free,
Where grass and flowers, the livelong day,
Tell wond'rous tales to me;
When I love the light and hate the dark,
And trill a song, I know
My soul was the soul of a meadow lark—
Four thousand years ago.

But when I shrink from every sound—
When fancies make me flee;
And when, in hiding underground,
A whisper frightens me;
When I crop in fear my daily dole,
Then run and hide, I know
My soul was a poor little rabbit's soul—
Three thousand years ago.

But when I tread the wood and plain,
Devoid of fear or care,
And go my way in proud disdain,
Prepared to do and dare;
When thro' the hills my thunders roll,
When jackals crouch, I know
My soul was a lordly lion's soul—
Two thousand years ago.

But when I feed the poor and weak,
And prop the lame and gray,
And when I take my staff and seek
The lamb that's gone astray;
'Tis when my heart is free from taint,
Or any guile, I know
My soul of souls was the soul of a saint—
One thousand years ago.

POKER, PUSH AND PROSPERITY

You may talk as you will of the Poker game,
It built up this country—just the same.

For it taught our people to keep their nerve,
And never to blanch going round the curve.

It taught 'em to smile when their luck was bad,
And it taught 'em to frown when feeling glad.

It taught 'em to sigh and look in the dubs,
When they held four kings and the ace of clubs.

It taught 'em to chirrup and look right glad,
When a pair of deuces was all they had.

Many a railway was built with a rush—
Its capital only a bob-tailed flush.

Many a man set the world in a craze,
When all that he held was a pair of trays.

Many an elegant business starts
On the nine of spades and the queen of hearts.

They learned that nobody wanted "the stuff";
All they needed was nerve to bluff.

A splendid confidence—a courage grand—
A hand unshaking, and plenty of sand;

Courting a girl, or starting a row,
Running for office, or buying a cow.

Sparking a widow, or building a town;
Preaching, or calling the governor down.

Flinging a bridge over canyon or pass,
Or calmly boring for natural gas;

Working in climates both frigid and hot—
Hunting the walrus or sailing a yacht.

Going to church, or backing a bruiser,
Keeping hotel or building a cruiser.

Making it easy for folks to do well,
Or rigging a slick toboggan to hell.

Building a bank, or erecting a jail,
You'd swear that their hand was as big as a whale.

Marrying a wife, or gobbling their mush;
You'd think that they'd captured a royal flush.

You may preach, as you like, of the shame and the blame,
Yet life is a terrible Poker game.

Life is the limit; the jackpot, success,
Wealth, and applause, and love's tenderness.

Love or dishonor—triumph or disgrace—
Or a bed in the ditch when you draw for an ace.

Our lifeblood, our hopes in Heaven or earth,
We gamble away from the day of our birth.

HE KEEPETH THEM

"'Twas a long, long winter," said the Bug,
"But I didn't have to eat,
And in the wraps of Nature's rug
I slumbered calm and sweet.
I fear no harm in sun or snow," said he,
"For He who keeps the children keepeth me."

"'Twas a long, long winter," said the Fawn,
"But I never hungry went,
And 'gainst the wolves, at dark or dawn,
The bow of God was bent.
I fear no harm in sun or snow," saith he,
"For He who keeps the children keepeth me."

"The cold was long, and yet—" the Orphan said,
"I never hungry went.
And Someone warmed me in my little bed,
And food I longed for sent.
I fear no harm in sun or snow, for He
Who keeps the Bugs and Fawns, He keepeth me."

THE BOOK THAT ISN'T READ

In times that are to memory lost,
In far-off days of yore,
They tell me that a Bible cost
A thousand pounds or more;
And I am not at all surprised
At reverence of old—
Methinks that things are chiefly prized
By what they cost in gold.

For men would toil in days of old
Through sufferings intense
To earn a book that now is sold
For six or seven cents;
And men have drained their bosom's core
In many a bloody war,
For that which now is purchased for
The price of a cigar.

That proverb old occurs to me—
The Book is not exempt—
'Tis that "Familiarity
Too often breeds contempt."
A paradox—Oh, mirthless mirth
That puts the right things wrong!
The only priceless book on earth
Is cheaper than a song!

I see it laid away from light,
Its covers thick with dust,
Its clasps that once were free and bright
Are soldered fast with rust.

Man falls each day a sacrifice
Before the god of self,
While that neglected Bible lies
Unopened on the shelf.

My lady's fine piano is
Her comfort, pride and boast;
If Bibles cost as much, I wis,
She'd prize her Bible most;
She'd guard it with a jealousy
That had a tender grace;
The room that held it, then would be
A sweet and sacred place.

Alas! the world around doth teach
What sets my blood on fire;
Man stands upon the Word to reach
Some selfish, mean desire.
The Dead Sea fruit above his head,
The Bible 'neath his feet,
And if his hands with crime are red
The horror is complete!

Get to your tents, O Israel!
Hew down the Golden Calf!
Pick up the Bible where it fell
'Mid cobwebs, dust and chaff.
Call on our growing nation
Through this Dominion broad,
To be one congregation
And love the Word of God!

WHAT SHE MEANT

Her lovely eyes, they held a taunt and also an appeal,
Pit pat, pit pat, pit pat, my heart within me went,
She said she'd never marry till she met with her ideal;
Now I wonder what she meant by that—
I wonder what she meant.

I earn a moderate salary (I do it for my health)—
But she has saved up quite a pile, it's drawing eight per cent;
"Thank my stars," she says to me, "I need not wed for wealth."
Now, I wonder what she meant by that—
I wonder what she meant.

My arteries were ecstasied, my heart was glad with glee,
When tenderly upon my face her gentle gaze she bent,
She said she knew her daddy thought a terrible lot of me;
Now, I wonder what she meant by that—
I wonder what she meant.

She said she'd be home all day on Wednesday,
She seldom was away from home in Lent,
But oh, she'd be so lonely 'cuz her maw would be away;
Now, I wonder what she meant by that—
I wonder what she meant.

She said the customs nowadays they filled her soul with
fright,
She'd take it very kindly as a lovely compliment,
If I didn't try to hug and kiss her when I said good-
night;
Now, I wonder what she meant by that—
I wonder what she meant.

I didn't—yes—I didn't, I fumbled for my hat,
And told her what a very pleasant evening I had
spent;
She sighed and said the average man was blinder than
a bat;
Now, I wonder what she meant by that—
I wonder what she meant.

WHEN THE SAP IS RUNNIN' FREE

The seedtime and the harvest,
Behold they shall not fail,
The seed time and the harvest
Thro' all ages shall prevail;
Now I will give a reason
Why I should happy be,
For lo! it is the season
When the sap is runnin' free.

The snows are in the forest,
You sink down to your knee,
But the saddest and the sorest
Can now be glad with glee;
For the big sapsucker's drilling
In a lofty maple tree,
His canteen he is filling
With the sap that's runnin' free.

Oh, the crows they are paradin'
Away above our heads,
And the kildeers they are wadin'
Down in the marshy beds;
The big sapsucker's rapping
Makes a pleasant melody,
You will not catch him napping
When the sap is runnin' free.

Of coin you are not scanty,
And you may take your ease,
If you've a sugar shanty,
And a bunch of maple trees;
Oh, trouble can't come troublin',
And from all cares you're free,
When the bubblin' pots are bubblin'
And the sap is runnin' free.

And at the time of writing
The basswood buds do swell,
Cock robins are all fighting,
There's a bull frog in the well;
A waking world is yawning,
His tonsils I can see,
Lo! a better day is dawning,
For the sap is runnin' free.

HEROD IS KING

Grim Winter is a Herod,
He hears with fear and scorn,
That somewhere in his kingdom
A little child is born;
Predestined he to break
And fling his sceptre down,
And on a sunlit altar
To melt his icy crown.

They call the little baby,
The promise of the May,
Born among the snowdrifts,
Out where the rabbits play;
He's hid among the cedars,
Too young is he to know
That up and down the kingdom
The fierce child-killers go.

In Rama there is weeping,
And lamentations dire,
The ceaseless winds are hunting,
They never seem to tire;
The storms they never weary,
The frosts are ever rife,
They seek the precious baby
To take away his life.

Our northland is an Egypt,
There him they'll safely keep;
Lo, there the babe is hidden,
And there he's soothed to sleep;
He'll sleep till earth is shaken
By music overhead,
A bluebird cries, "Awaken!
Herod the King is dead."

A snowdrift was his Bethlehem,
Where first he drew his breath,
But April—grass green April—
Shall be his Nazareth!
That it should be fulfilled
The prophet's olden tale,
That certainly the seedtime
And harvest shall not fail.

Behold the great gray wolves,
Each day of wind and snow,
Up and down the kingdom,
The fierce child-killers go.
So weep no more, sweet mother,
But laugh and pray instead,
A song your grief shall smother,
Herod the king is dead.

BAIRNIES CUDDLE DOON

The baby trilliums heard the rain
Down in their beds below,
And then they whispered, "Muvver, dear,
Oh! can't we start and grow?
For in the wondrous world above
The south winds sway and swoon."
The mother trilliums answered them:
"Oh, bairnies, cuddle doon."

"Oh, muvver, dear, a field mouse came
And touched me on the arm,
He said, 'Tis raining up above,
The rain is soft and warm;
The groundhogs go and wash themselves
Down in the big lagoon!"
The mother trillium laughed and said:
"Bairnies, cuddle doon."

"Oh, muvver, a nice straddle bug
My fingers he did squeeze,
He said the sap was running in
The great big maple trees;
He said the nights are sweet and warm,
Beneath a gentle moon."
But, soothing them, the mother said:
"Oh, bairnies, cuddle doon."

"Oh, children, in the world above
The stormy winds still blow,
And you would perish, children dear,
In swirling drifts of snow;
A winter thaw may fool a man;
It never fools the loon,
So snuggle underneath the clothes,
My bairnies, cuddle doon.

"For when the winter time is done,
Your grave clothes you will shed,
You'll stand before the golden sun,
High heaven overhead;
The Lord will give you hints some morn,
You'll hear a far-off tune,
So till Great Gabriel blows his horn,
My bairnies, cuddle doon."

BACK TO GALILEE

A little stream that swiftly sprang
From 'neath a snowbank softly sang
A wondrous song, I listening heard;
My soul translated every word,
This was its happy song of glee:
"I'm on my way to Galilee!"

My home was in that lovely sea,
The blessed Lake of Galilee.
The jealous sun, to fill his cup,
One fiery day did lift me up.
And then in windy clouds distressed
I floated east, south, north, and west;
I prayed the gales to pity me
And drift me back to Galilee.

I pleaded to return; but no,
The sharp wind turned me into snow.
And where the Arctic isles outcrop
They piled me on a mountain-top;
And there, in spite of all my fears,
I flamed as ice a thousand years.
One day I slipped into the sea,
And started off for Galilee.

An iceberg like a castle bright,
I southward sailed in great delight,

And as I went, in rain or shine,
I asked the way to Palestine.
I told them that my water sweet
Once wet the blessed Saviour's feet,
The islands clapped their hands to me:
"Safe journey, thou, to Galilee!"

But that was not my destiny,
I faded in the ruthless sea;
Since then, as mist, as dew, or rain,
I have refreshed the hill and plain,
And given drink so cool and deep,
To pine and palm, to men and sheep;
But ever wished once more to be
Back home again in Galilee.

Once more the journey I begin,
My darling goal to try to win,
Once more I'll leap the awful edge
Of vast Niagara's yawning ledge;
From morn to night, from night to morn
I'll seek the sea where I was born,
I hear her voice, she calls to me,
I'm coming, Mother Galilee!

THE LEAFLESS SHADOWMAKER

To the windy winds that wallop
With their thongs the sounding sky,
To the drifting drifts that gallop,
Lo, I offer my defy!
The snowy undertaker
That puts the shrubs below,
He daunts not Shadowmaker—
Blow, ye winds, I-oh!

It is a dread alliance,
The frost, the gale, the snow.
I bid them all defiance
And the windy winds that blow!
Like white stampeded cattle
The doom drifts come and go;
Behold, I give you battle—
Blow, ye winds, I-oh!

I'm an actor in this drama,
I'm a semaphore, you know,
For birds from Alabama
In spring that northward go—
That northward go in springtime,
Where the young buds swell and grow.
I am waiting for the sing-time,
So blow, blow, ye winds, I-oh!

I hear a partridge drumming
Amid the poplars gray;
I hear the wild geese coming
In squadrons far away.
Their wings are throbbing, throbbing,
As boldly north they go,
Where unloosed seas are sobbing,
So blow, ye winds, I-oh!

From the lands of alligators
The sweet birds take their flight;
They'll rest, these navigators,
In my bosom for a night.
Ye battle with no craven,
I've been, I'd have ye know,
An hundred years a haven—
So blow, ye winds, I-oh!

I've met with wild ovations
In the tempest's angry path,
And here for generations
I have dared the cyclone's wrath;
I am a landmark prized, I wis,
By those who come and go,
Our God, He planted me for this—
So blow, ye winds, I-oh!

THE COLD

He's older than the moon—the same old moon—
He's old, old, old!
He singeth still a tune—the same old tune—
"I'm cold—cold—cold!"
He scattereth his frost before like ashes,
Beneath him many a drift is rolled;
And through the icicles that fringe his gray mustaches
He crieth: "I am cold—cold—cold!"

He crosseth many a mountain, plain and channel,
Before him all our folk retire.
They shield themselves with feathers, fur and flannel.
He is a devil, and they fight with fire—
With roaring fires, and all our world is stoking;
Behind the flame the heart of man is bold;
And ever and anon we hear him croaking:
"I am the cold—cold—cold!"

As conqueror the empty pasture hails him,
The snapping fences with his praises ring,
But still he knows a tireless foeman trails him,
A sure avenger, and his name is Spring.
But ere the giant shall be overtaken,
In many a crannied home he'll find his goal;
In triumph he will cry with voice unshaken:
"I shall take my toll—toll—toll!"

And in his victim's ears I hear him sighing:
"Fear no harm—harm—harm,
This is the easiest, sweetest way of dying!
Ye are warm—warm—warm!"
He is strong—his captives are yet stronger;
They struggle free, and then their eyes behold
The summer tents of God, and then no longer
Are they cold—cold—cold!

MY HOLLYHOCKS

Majestic, tall and willowy, before
The breeze they bend, they curtsey and they sway,
And in the moonlight, grouped around my door,
They call up memories of a far-off day;
For they are ladies of the old regime,
Their souls returning o'er the silver sea;
They come for two sweet weeks, as in a dream,
To spend their summer holidays with me.

Child women of my boyhood, and the girls,
Who with a sweet romance made glad my youth,
Once more the ring around a rosy swirls,
'Tis Pan himself who pipes in very truth;
And I can tell them every one by name,
A Dulce and Dollie, these are they I dream,
Kit and Jen, Susie, Mollie, Mame,
They are the ladies of the old regime.

Their graves—I know not where their graves may be,
One graced a palace, one died in a ditch;
Two fell asleep beneath the dark deep sea,
One sleeps in marble, oh, so dead and rich!
What boots it where they sleep, in sea or sand,
Enough to know that their dear souls are free,
And they do come, a glad and joyous band,
To spend their summer holidays with me.

Re-incarnated in my hollyhocks,
Happy and graceful, ever sweet and dear,
Tossing their heads, shaking their glowing locks,
Laughing sweet, only my soul can hear;
Again they'll leave me, and the time is nigh,
The inevitable hour of parting pain,
And some sweet midnight they will cry "Good-bye,"
And "God be with you till we come again."

THINKING OF SOMETHING ELSE

We never blunder only when
We're thinking of something else;
Mistakes are made by tongue or pen,
When thinking of something else.
This world we stumble and fumble thro',
Making a pretty how-d'ye-do,
And the reason is that I and you
Are thinking of something else.

Didya ever spark a lady who
Was thinking of someone else?
The jig is up and you are thro',
She's thinking of someone else.
She doesn't hark to what you say,
She's gazing past you far away;
You feel like a bucket full of whey,
She's thinking of someone else.

You stub your toes, you skin your nose,
Thinking of something else,
This is the cause of all your woes,
Thinking of something else.
You go to church—right thing to do—
From first to last the service thro',
You heard no word because that you
Were thinking of something else.

Don't turn a busy corner if
You're thinking of something else,
A shoffer may give you an awful biff,
Thinking of something else.
You'll see some stars, your ears will hum,
And feeling kind of stiff and numb,
You'll find yourself in kingdom come
Thinking of something else.

Many's the time you kneel to pray,
Thinking of something else,
And then the angels whispering say,
"He's thinking of something else!"
You'll never get safely over there,
You'll never be able to climb the stair;
In short, you'll never get anywhere,
Thinking of something else.

PLINKITY PLUNK

The January thaw is yet,
Our shingles are not proof
Against the wilderness of wet,
We have a leaky roof.
The holes—I cannot thatch them,
The leaks come down kerplunk,
I've got ten cans to catch them,
The situation's punk;
Plink—plank—plunk,
Tinkle—tinkle—tinkle—tank,
Tink—tank—tunk!

The milking pail sings alto,
The washtub it sings bass,
A tin pail sings contralto,
All with a wondrous grace;
A bake dish is soprano,
The tenor is a pot,
As fine as a piano
Is an old bathtub I've got.
Tink—tank-tunk!
Tinkle—tunkle—tinkle—tunkle,
Plunk—plank—plunk!

Some soul of song doth grant them
Many a joyous tune,
Many a noble anthem,
Many an ancient rune.

"Ring the bells of heaven!"
"Let them horses go!"
"Wait for the wagon,"
"Old black Joe."
Plink—plank—plunk,
Tinkle—tunkle—tinkle—tunkle,
Tink—tank—tunk!

"Comin' thro' the rye,"
"Long, long ago,"
"Won't you tell me why?"
"Kiss me quick and go!"
"And when the pie was opened,
The birds began to sing"
"The Maple Leaf forever,"
"God save the King!"
Tink—tank—tunk!
Tinkle—tunkle—tinkle—tunkle,
Plink—plank—plunk!

UNORTHODOX

They tell us that in Heaven is everlasting Spring,
I was born in Canada and don't believe this thing,
I cannot think of Christmas, the real thing, don't you know,
If there wasn't wind and frost and lots of nice old snow;
If there wasn't comfy mufflers to put around your throats,
And overcoats and blankets and quilted petticoats.

They tell us that in Heaven 'tis ever summer time,
But, oh, to me that story it doesn't sound sublime,
For I was born in Canada, and I look to the day
When winds go roaring-soaring across the summer way;
When old Jack Frost gets out his file and sharpens up our wits,
And we must wear our flannels, warm petticoats and mitts.

They tell us that in Heaven the flowers are ever there;
Once in a while I'd like to see the snowdrifts everywhere.
I'd like to snowball someone—and, oh! I'd like a slide,
I'd love to chase a farmer's sleigh and have a little ride.
I'd love to have a pair of cheeks as red as any rose,
I'd love to have a real nice suit of all-wool underclothes.
They tell us that in Heaven the birds sing all the time,
But oh, I'd love to hear the frost bit pine trees chime;

I'm a big barbarian, I love to hear the moan
Of cedars crying in the night, forsaken and alone;
Other men from year to year may slumber in a shed,
But oh, I love my blankets and my li'l old feather bed.

They tell us that in Heaven the skies do never scowl,
Rats! I love to hear the wild winds yelp and howl!
I love to hear the tempest roaring at the moon,
I love to hear my mother say, "Bairnies cuddle doon!"
I love to snuggle (did you ever snuggle?) in the winter weather,
One or two or three—holding fast together.

They tell us that in Heaven it is a summer clime,
Nevertheless, I'm going to root for the good old winter time,
Come on, ye winds of Winter, come on, ye frost and snow,
I'm a thousand years of age to-day, you never brought me woe;
And when I die I'll ask the Lord—and I'll be understood—
"Give me a month of sleighing," and I'll get it if I'm good.

UNCHARTED SEAS*

Our barque hath dragged her anchors and she drifts
From out the port before a shifting breeze,
She yaws and wallows and her cargo shifts,
She's drifting blindly thro' uncharted seas;
The Lord of sea and land hath heard our call,
We've got a skipper who knows it all.

He never stood upon a deck before,
He doesn't know the many things he should,
He never was a hundred yards from shore,
Nor knows his lati—from his longitude.
With much uneasiness he filleth me,
He calls the mizzenmast the whipple-tree!

"Haul on her hame straps, splice her bellybands,
Move smartly there or someone will be skinned.
Take hold and pull upon the lines, all hands,
And start that fanning mill, we need some wind."
'Tis well to think—for yonder comes a squall—
That this here skipper seems to know it all.

Away we go, defying time and tide,
We hit a rock, the skipper cries, "Whoa, Emma!"
The cruel rocks they gore our side,
Like the horns of an angry dilemma,
Bang goes the mast, the skipper sez, sez he,
"There goes our best and biggest axle-tree."

"Shiver my timbers," roars the skipper bold,
"With pleasure," answereth the cruel rocks,
"How much water can your old hold hold,
Before you're liable to wet your socks?"
"Oh, dadda, I hear a siren call,"
"Shet up," quoth the skipper who knows it all.

"Oh, dadda, I hear the sound of guns,
Oh, say, what may it be?"
"It's a privateer of labor, my dear,
And they're likely shootin' at me;
But I kin weather their powder'n ball,"
Roared the skipper who knows it all.

"Oh, dadda, I see a shining light,
Oh, say, what may it be?"
And her dad he answered, "That's all right,
You must be lookin' at me."
For to tell you the truth, there's nothin' small
About the skipper who knows it all.

* This has reference to Ontario's 1919-23 Farmer Premier.

"BUSHED"

("The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, tho' he eat little or much"—Ecclesiastes.)

"—Weariness can snore upon the flint, while rusty sloth finds the down pillow hard."—Shakespeare.

It's Saturday night! I'm tired, rather,
I've finished the job and had my supper;
The team's tired, too, they were all in a lather,
But now they're free from the bit and crupper;
I worked them an hour past quittin' time—
You see I wanted to finish the job.
It wasn't fair, and I felt it a crime,
When I heard the old mare sigh an' sob.

But she plodded on—nothing will stick her—
Willin' as ever to hear the call,
But she bit her mate, and gave a nicker
As soon as she heard the trace chains fall.
But now they're down in the beaver grasses,
Up to their bellies in bloomin' feed,
While over their heads the nighthawk passes,
And Dolly and Dan are glad indeed.

I'm tired to-night! It's weary walkin'
Behind the plow from morn till eve;
I hear the wimmin folks inside talkin'—
I'd rather sleep, I do believe.
That, I fancy, will serve my turn,
I'll wash my feet and soak my head,
'N drink some buttermilk outen the churn,
Then wind the clock an' I'm off to bed.

That buttermilk's good! it's eatin' an' drinkin',
It freshens one up an' cools the mouth—
There's bushels uv whip-o-wills out, I 'm thinkin'
Whoopin' away—sure sign uv a drought.
A sprinkle uv rain wouldn't hurt the pertaters;
The frogs is singing the Canaday reel;
They hain't got toons like that in theayters—
By jing! ef I havn't blistered my heel!

There's some uv the neighbors callin' on Min,
Swappin' their little hopes and cares;
Like's not they'll prob'ly call me in—
I'll quietly mosy along upstairs;
I'll sleep like a chicken shet up in a coop.
Then, at the earliest streak of light,
I'll stand in my shirt tail out on the stoop
An' see that everything's safe an' right.

The bed aint hard, ner yet aint narrow;
And oh! the pillows are cool an' white,
An' I could sleep on a rough wheel-barrow,
An' never roll over, this blessed night!
To-morrow is Sunday, to-night is peace!
I—hope—thet—dog—aint—after the sheep,
There's somethin'—frightened—them—pesky—geese;
I'm falling—falling—falling—asleep.

GLORY HALLELUJERUM JONES

"Howdiddy git that name? you ask;"
The speaker sat on the herring cask;
He oped his knife and whittled a stick—
"He got that name when the woods wuz thick;
When roads wuz scurse and swamps wuz wide,
An' the big grey wolves knew where to hide;
He toddled away from home, he did,
One day when he wuz a little kid;
The fields he passed, the creek he crossed,
An' Glory Hallelujerum Jones wuz lost!

"They blew the horn, an' the neighbors kem,
An' they brought their muskets 'long with them;
Ole man Jones wuz all on the jump,
He climbed on top of an ole pine stump,
He said: 'When the cedars ye enter in
Shout 'Glory Hallelujerum' loud's ye kin;
It's his favorite hymn—that poor little coon
Will answer ye quick when he hears that toon,
Shout while yer seekin' my blue-eyed boy,
Shout, 'Glory Hallelujerum, Glory Hallelujerum—
Glory Hallelujerum, ahoy!'

"So they lit their torches an' all sot out,
An' down in the woods they giv a shout:
'Glory Hallelujerum!'
The song went swelling up in the dark,
Ho! 'Glory Hallelujerum,' hark!
An' ole man Jones he led the crowd,
An' now an' then he'd holler out loud:
'Don't fire yer guns, you'll frighten the boy,
Sing Glory Hallelujerum, Glory Hallelujerum—
Glory Hallelujerum, ahoy!'

"The moon wuz dark an' the stars wuz hid,
Pritty hard luck for the little kid;
But the neighbors sang in the darksome brush—
'Gul-lory Hallelujerum! Hush!'
The woman folks cried in their clearings dark,
'Glory Hallelujerum—hark!'
Every art they did employ,
To scare the wolves an' find that boy;
His father kissed his last new toy,
With 'Glory Hallelujerum, Glory Hallelujerum—
Gory Hallelujerum, ahoy!'

At last a cheer burst thro' the night,
'Gul-lory Hallelujerum!'
The torches blazed in a circle of light,
'Gul-lory Hallelujerum!'
There he sot as spry as a frog,
An' cool an' content as a knot on a log,
Fer that little kid wuz full of sand;
He wuz singing away to beat the band,
'Glory Hallelujerum!'
'Lost?' says he (it's whut he sed),
'I want a wolf to draw my sled;
Yuv frightened the Injuns with that hoorah,
I wanted a scalp to give ter maw!'
Then the forest rocked with a song of joy,
An' Jones he yelled, ez he hugged his boy,
'Gul-lory Hallelujerum, Glory Hallelujerum—
Gul-lory Hallelujerum, ahoy!'"

SLEIGH BELLS LONG AGO

I sit and list to the sleigh bells,
As they tinkle o'er the snow,
And with the rush of their music
Come tremors of grief and woe;
And my heart goes back to the cedars
In the wonderful long ago.

And I drive through the echoing woodlands,
Over the glimmering snow;
A maid with a face of beauty,
And sweet voice soft and low,
Sits close to my side and whispers,
"Darling, I love you so!"

I start with a cry of anguish,
For that was long ago;
And I see a grave that's newly made
Under the falling snow;
But only now I heard her say,
"Darling, I love you so!"

OLD MAN THUNDER

I'm Old Man Thunder! Lo, I come
With roar of wind and throb of drum;
And all the wide earth under
Looks up when I am passing by—
The cattle clap their hands and cry,
"Oho! the Thunder!"

The forest trees beneath me bend—
I grip, I crush, I tear, I rend
The curse of thirst asunder;
I put the dusty day to rout,
I love to hear my people shout,
"Oho! the Thunder!"

And when I strike a match, the light
Spins round the world in circles bright
And fills all hearts with wonder;
And when I stand and stamp my feet
A cry goes up from field and street,
"Oho!" the Thunder!"

I fill the sky with sweet ozone,
I wet the pastures to the bone;
I never blunder.
Hark and hear my rain drops thud;
I turn the dust heaps into mud,
"Oho! the Thunder!"

THE MAKING OF A BRITON

Oh, this is the song that floats along
As the red battalions go;
This is the march that puts the starch
In the red ranks' ebb and flow:
"Oh, we are the men who guard the den
Of the Lion without fail;
They made us British by getting too skittish
And twisting the Lion's tail.

"Yonder doth float the starry flag,
And here our own is seen;
As friends they'll shine, but not entwine,
For a river must flow between—
A river must flow before our tent,
However they rage and wail,
For they lost the half of a continent
By twisting the Lion's tail.

"Cousins they are, and shall remain;
They never shall be our dad;
They never will scoff at us again,
And they wish they never had.
We need no towers along our front,
We need no shirt of mail.
Oh! didn't they do a foolish stunt
When they twisted the Lion's tail?

"The Lion sits in his splendid den
In the midst of the good old isle;
His claws are sheathed, and his face is wreathed
With a sweet, complacent smile.
The Eagle doth cluck like a friendly duck,
As the Beaver hits the trail;
That's better far than threatening war
By twisting the Lion's tail.

"Where rocks are pent, yon monument
A scene of battle decks;
Where Yankees—Biff! went over the cliff,
And broke their sanguine necks.
Oh! why did we swoop them into the soup?
Why did we our cousins whale?
They crossed the river our timbers to shiver
By twisting the Lion's tail."

And this is the song that floats along
As the red battalions swing;
This is the song that's chorused strong by soldiers of the king:
"Oh, we are the men who guard the den
Of the Lion without fail;
They made us British by getting too skittish
And twisting the Lion's tail!"

THE FITTEST ONLY SHALL SURVIVE

I stood alone, when all at once the scales
Fell from mine eyes, and lo, I saw the vales
And mountain sides, as far as eye could see,
Filled with a shining host of goodly company;
And on a ladder stretched to heaven afar,
One end on earth, one fixed against a star,
Ascending and descending angels fair,
Whose feet made music on the golden stair;
And all the while from heaven's melodious throat
This wondrous song kept dropping note by note;
"The useful man shall save his soul alive—
The fittest only shall the grave survive."

And near me stood an angel for awhile
He watched me sadly with a pitying smile;
"Fear not," he said, "and do not troubled be
By things that you may hear or things you see.
The Lord Himself hath placed me by thy side
To teach thee certain truths and be thy guide."
"Why am I here," I cried, "from earth beguiled?"
"You haven't got religion," and he smiled;
"You felt that God was libelled when they said
That He a place on earth called hell had made;
Thou shalt return to earth this thing to tell;
God made the heavens only—man made hell!"

"But where," I asked, "do all the sinners go?"
I wondered when I saw him smiling so,
And when he spake I reverent held my breath,
"Dost thou not know the wage of sin is death?
Surely you have not studied as you ought
The holy book wherein that truth is taught;
On every page that lesson meets the eye—
The soul that sins, that soul will surely die!

And death means DEATH—the dead man's hand no more
Shall have a chance to knock upon the door,
Good men alone shall save their souls alive—
The fittest only shall the tomb survive.

So, search the Scriptures; all your soul engage,
The world beneath you is one fruitful page;
The birds, the beasts, the fishes in the sea,
The corn and grasses brushing 'gainst thy knee,
The buzzing insects, yea, the very worms
That bide within the earth, the unseen germs—
All teach this law that rules the heavens and earth,
Yea, rules each little being from his birth;
And they will teach you by their endless strife,
The victor's crown is everlasting life.
They teach it daily in their little lives—
He only that is fit the strife survives.

And knowing this, then let thy soul be brave;
Destroying hell is harnessed to the grave!
There fixed for aye by an unyielding bond—
Rejoice to think it hath no grip beyond,
God made the universe, and made it well—
Dost think His holy fingers fashioned hell?
The earth of agony, the skies of gloom,
The fields of vice, are bounded by the tomb,
This law is merciful, tho' mayhap stern,
Man made of dust shall unto dust return.
Why should the God-head seek the dust to save?
The living only shall survive the grave.

In God's wide universe of earth and air
There's no abiding place for dead men there;
And in the other world beyond man's view
That constant law, unbreakable, holds true.

Go back to earth and mock their foolish strife;
Tell every man to eat the Bread of Life.
Our Lord on earth, in troubles dark and dim,
Performed good deeds—let all men copy Him.
Tell them they must, to save their souls alive,
Be numbered with the fittest to suryive."

"God made the heavens only—then the earth
Is part of heaven?" the angel said, with mirth;
"Know that the heavens are many, and the first
And lowest heaven is that earth accursed—
Cursed not of God, as pulpit men have said,
But cursed by hells, by human malice made.
That lower heaven is their first and last;
Their fatal feet the grave have never passed;
Thus far and then no farther shall they go,
To turn another heaven into woe.
Such people cannot save their souls alive—
None but the fittest shall the grave survive.

"And thus you see the Lord to thee doth give
A fighting chance to either die or live;
You have your chance to turn to dust and clay,
Or be a cord of wood, or bale of hay.
Thus will you gain the angels' just contempt,
To pass the tomb you never made attempt;
And they will judge you by that awful rule;
'He must have been a scoundrel or a fool.'
Shall you, O Khan, then let your chances pass;
To go on record—angel or an ass?
Know that you must, to save thy soul alive,
Be numbered with the fittest to survive.

GRANDMOTHER'S QUILT

There's an old, old quilt—a dear old quilt—
A warm old quilt, at home,
As near and dear to my heart to-day
As when I began to roam;
It covered the new-born baby,
It covered the solemn dead.
It covered me up when I was a boy
Asleep on Grandmother's bed.

Of patches 'tis made, and quaint old pieces
Of Grandmother's dresses are seen:
And pieces from gowns of her sisters and nieces,
In yellow and red and green,
There are pieces of silk—Oh! the rare old silk!
And reds—Ah! the rare old reds!
And bits of satin as white as milk,
In the quilt on Grandma's bed.

There are patterns, odd, that haven't been seen
Since Jacques Cartier was here;
There are patterns you'd think that couldn't have been—
So comical, quaint and queer,
This is the dress my Grandmother wore,
When she welcomed the heroes who bled
At Queenston Heights; here's a piece, you see,
In the quilt on Grandmother's bed.

But the patch I love, the dearest of all,
Is a glittering patch of white,
I never can see it without a pang—
Yet mixed with a strange delight.

'Tis a piece of the gown that my Mother wore,
When she to the altar was led,
It's the sweetest patch of them all, I think,
In the quilt on Grandmother's bed.

'Twas Grandmother's bed, it's Mother's bed,
And Grandma's long gone home;
She called me and kissed me before she died,
And warned me never to roam;
One wish I would to my friends bequeath,
When I my race have sped;
Just lay me down for an hour beneath
The quilt on Grandmother's bed.

TOO MANY SQUIRTS

I asked him his opinion,
Is it government or what?
Whose fault is it? What's the reason
The country's got dry rot?
Something's blue moulding the nation—
Whatever it is, it hurts,
And he answered, "Thish yer country
Raises too many squirts!"

"Thur's too many cock robin doctors,
While there's scarce a good hired man;
An' pee-wee lawyers are thicker
Than dust on a grist mill ben;
Bob-o'-link preachers air numerous,
Thish yer I boldly asserts;
This kentry (his visage was humorous)
She cultivates too many squirts."

"Thur's too many agents an' drummers,
I reckon thur's peddlers galore;
Thur's too many tiddly-wink farmers
A-keeping hotel er a store;
'Taint thistles, ner yet 'taint ragweed,
Ner docken, ner witch grass, wot hurts—
Our crop as a nation's teetotally
Smothered with too many squirts!"

I WILL STEAL FOR HER

I'll steal the breath of the opening leaf
And breathe it against your cheek;
I'll steal the scent of the autumn sheaf,
For thee, Oh maiden meek!
I'll steal the catkins where willows bide,
Where bees that bumble sip;
I'll steal the wealth of the forest wide,
And splash it against your lip.

I'll steal a song from the bluebird's throat,
And I'll pour it in your ear;
From the broken nest when the henhawks gloat,
Darling, I'll steal a tear.
I'll steal a kiss from the swallow sweet,
A laugh where the blackbirds be,
A dance from under the robins' feet,
Darling, I'll steal for thee!

THE PERFUME OF THE SODS

Along the shaded, lone concession way,
At twilight when the sky is gray,
The dew dips down and sucks aloft
The smell, elusive, subtle, soft,
Of new-mown hay.

And such a homely, country smell it is,
That he who owns a meadow, joy is his;
But yet he cannot say "Lo, all is mine!"
The world about him breathes the breath divine
Of new-mown hay.

The farmer boy, his feet may far off stray
Down many a weary, strange and devious way;
It helps to ease a heart-ache if he smells
E'en in a dream the fragrant breath that swells
From new-mown hay.

How many perfumes come and go, but they
Are half-forgotten in the dew-wet day;
On mountain, mere, on hillside sand or sod,
There is no smell this side the fields of God
Like new-mown hay.

MY SUMMER FALLOW

For years my summer fallow lay,
A wealthy waste of grass and hay—
A wilder place you scarce could match—
The maiden's famous berry patch.
I've counted, when the skies were fair,
Twenty and six sun-bonnets there,
And saw them all in terror break
Before a modest garter snake!
I ever felt a joy intense
To help each fair one o'er the fence,
And praise her ankles or her face,
And get her thanks with artless grace.
Many a ground-hog I have dug
From out his habitation snug;
And when high hung the noiseless moon
I've laid in wait to meet the coon;
One spot I noticed as the best,
'Twas always greener than the rest,
A deeper, richer, sweeter green
Than elsewhere in the field was seen.
On high the goose grass spread her blooms,
The red top grew so thick and rank
That on its knees it swooned and sank!
That spot had always furnished, free,
The village dames with boneset tea;
There, 'neath the sheltering mandrake's lid,
The fledgling Bob Whites softly hid;
And none but I the secret knew
Of where the precious ginseng grew.

One autumn, when the woods were brown,
I plowed the old-time fallow down,
And worked away, with tireless feet,
Until 'twas seeded down with wheat.

Next summer—it was plain to view—
Thereon the harvest richer grew;
To keep its feet it did its best—
Then lodged—prone lay its golden crest;
A tangled, moist, luxuriant square—
The ground-hogs all foregathered there—
And—only farmers, wise and skilled,
Will understand—it never "filled."
Ere winter winds began to blow
I took my spade and dug below,
And found some curious carven stones,
Some broken skulls, and scattered bones;
A precious string of wampum beads,
A little pot of roasted seeds;
Some needles, made of polished bone,
Some broken pipes—an axe of stone;
For I had found the quiet graves
Of long-forgotten Indian braves.

O! splendid Resurrection, here!
Renewed with each returning year!
To rise in grass and flowers and trees
To feed the wild deer and the bees;
To fill with wealth their sheltering sod—
A yearly sacrifice to God!
May I return to thee, O earth!
The mother dear, that gave me birth,
And pay to thee, whene'er I go,
A little of the debt I owe.
Thus, resurrected every spring,
I'll hear the merry blue-birds sing,
Their voices every May-day morn
Will sweeter sound than Gabriel's horn!
And oft, I hope, my grateful soul
Shall thro' my summer fallow stroll!

THE DEPREDATING HEN

Of all things in nature that afflict the sons of men,
There is nothing that I know of beats the depredating hen;
If you see a wild-eyed woman firing brickbats from the shed,
You can bet a hen has busted up her little flowerbed!
She plunders and she scratches, she cackles and she hatches,
And forty thousand cowboys couldn't keep her in a pen,
She was sent on earth to fret us, to excoriate the lettuce;
She's a thoro'-going nuisance, is the depredating hen.

I threw a brick and missed her, as she hustled out my beans,
But Julius Caesar's statue was smashed to smithereens,
I saw her digging rifle pits where I'd put my pansies in,
I threw a good sized rock, and hit my hired man on the shin.
She busts all bounds and shackles; she giggles and she cackles,
She makes me say some earnest things I haven't time to pen;
I never used bad language, but now I'm filled with anguish,
Alas! I've broke the record thro' that depredating hen.

But now thro'out my cabinet there floats a pleasant
smell,
And the reason for that perfume isn't very hard to tell,
For when I rose this morning, saw my cabbage bed a
wreck,
I caught that depredating hen and wrung her cussed
neck.
I hear her fizz and crackle, no more she'll scratch and
cackle,
Or make my summer garden look like some hyena's den;
She far too long has bossed me, she far too much has
cost me—
I'll eat at luncheon time to-day a hundred dollar hen.

LET'S DIG A HOLE!

Up north men speak thus, 'tis said,
(How very droll!)
"Go bring a crowbar, pick and spade,
Let's dig a hole!

'For gold beneath our feet lies thick,
We soon shall roll
In wealth; bring hither spade and pick,
Let's dig a hole;"

All men on earth are just that way,
They have a goal,
But ere they touch the ladder they
Must dig a hole.

When we were kids in kilt and skirt,
We loved to roll,
Like saurians, in the mud and dirt,
"Let's dig a hole!"

To follow down a groundhog, fox,
A crawfish—mole,
Thro' roots and clay, thro' sand and rocks,
We digged a hole.

And when I built this house—for you!
Behold the scroll!
The first thing that I had to do,
Was dig a hole.

And thou would'st build a church—dear maid,
Is that thy goal?
You first must get a pick and spade,
And dig a hole.

And shall we plant an apple tree,
On this sweet knoll?
First hither bring a spade to me,
We'll dig a hole.

Behold! I dig from day to day,
To pay my toll,
"Root, hog, or die!"—I hear you say,
"Let's dig a hole!"

My poor old body's all worn out,
God save my soul!
I hear the graveyard artist shout—
"Let's dig a hole!"

JUST ONE WIFE

"Git married again?—why, mister,
I wouldn't have the name;
What'd Lizzie think of me?
'Twould fill my soul with shame.
Git married again, say, stranger,
I take that for a slur,
I've got a wife, I reckon,
An' I'll be true to her.

"They say she's dead; 'taint so.
Why she is with me yet,
My comrade, wife, my sweetheart,
My guiding star, my pet.
An' I kin hear at evening,
The rustle of her dress,
Her small hand on my shoulder
Falls like a soft caress.

"My wife was ill—the Healer
Touched her, and she was whole,
My wife is since that winter's day
A fair and lovely soul;
As soon's I git the harvest in,
The harvest of my life,
I'll turn the ole team out to grass,
An' go'n see my wife.

"Git married again!—why, mister,
That's bigamy, of course,
So long as Lizzie sticks to me
I won't git no divorce.
You see that I am satisfied,
Contented with my lot,
So if you've no objection
I'll keep the wife I've got."

BEJINGO AND BY GOSH!

I like to hear the Grenadiers,
The boys, I mean, who swept the west,
Stand up and tell of scenes of war,
With kindling eye and martial crest;
Of fearful scenes that they've gone through,
Of things they did and didn't do,
"Bejingo, we were at Batoche,
And fit at Fish Creek, too, by gosh!"

I like the flush of honest pride,
I like to mark their cockey air,
I like the broad and swelling breast,
The forage cap set on a hair,
You talk to them of Cut Knife Hill,
Their answer gives your soul a thrill,
"Bejingo, we were at Batoche,
And fit at Fish Creek, too, by gosh!"

And when they climb the golden stairs,
And meet the men of Waterloo,
Who straight begin to tell of how
They made old Bonaparte look blue,
The boys will simply wait a while,
Then answer with a pitying smile:
"Bejingo, we were at Batoche,
And fit at Fish Creek, too, by gosh!"

TODDLIN' ALONG

E'er for weal or woe,
Toddlin' along;
From starting post to pole,
Seeking the far-off goal,
Huntin' the better 'ole,
Toddlin' along.

At the age of three,
Toddlin' along.
Just an infant, he,
Toddlin' along.
Clutching here and there,
A table or a chair,
He has to take such care,
Toddlin' along.

And at twenty-three,
Toddlin' along.
Still an infant, he,
Toddlin' along.
Slipping, tripping, tumbling,
In dark or daylight stumbling,
Groping his way and fumbling,
Toddlin' along.

Or at fifty-three,
Toddlin' along.
Still an infant, he,
Toddlin' along.
Toddlin', toddlin', toddlin',
Dawdlin', dawdlin', dawdlin',
Waddlin', waddlin', waddlin',
Toddlin' along.

And at eighty-three,
Toddlin' along.
Yet an infant, he,
Toddlin' along.
Clinging here and there,
To table or a chair,
He has to take such care,
Toddlin' along.

He asks (the poor old soul)
Toddlin' along.
"Where is the better 'ole?"
Toddlin' along.
When comes the rosy dawn,
When night's dark clouds are gone,
He'll find it furder on,
Toddlin' along.

We are children,
Toddlin' along,
The world's bewilderin',
Toddlin' along.
O guide each groping soul,
Toward the promised goal,
Toward the better 'ole,
Toddlin' along.

COME, GENTLE SPRING

Me heart is heavy in me and I'm longing for the Spring,
Not only 'cause I want to hear the dicky birds sing,
But for something else that cheers me, and drives away my woe;
A garden where the onions grow.

Me Grannie usta fry them with the taters an' the pork,
And we et them with our fingers if we didn't have a fork,
To-night I know my weary feet would dearly love to go,
To a garden where the onions grow.

Everybody et them and no one thought of blame,
What difference was it anyway—our breaths all smelled the same,
She couldn't smell your breath if you kissed her, this I know,
In a garden where the onions grow.

Me Grannie died long years ago, I closed her tired eyes,
She went to claim her mansion 'way up yonder in the skies;
And many's the day I think of her with tenderness a-glow,
In a garden where the onions grow.

I'll turn a leaf to-morrow, for an angel put me wise,
If I would join my Grannie in that heavenly Paradise,
And I know she'll bid me welcome and send me out to hoe,
In her garden where the onions grow.

I'm sorely lonesome here to-night, my world is drab and dree,
And yet I know—I'm sure I know—the medicine for me;
Some buttered bread, a pinch of salt, and then away I go
To a garden where the onions grow.

THEY LOVE TO DO IT

I asked a joyous frog
Whose croaks the echoes woke,
"Why do you croak? He said, "I croak
Because I love to croak."

I asked a pretty star,
That twinkled near heaven's brink,
"Why do you twink?" She said: "I twink
Because I love to twink."

I asked a happy bird,
That carolled on the wing,
"Why do you sing?" He said: "I sing
Because I love to sing."

I asked a lovely girl,
Sweet as the skies above,
"Why do you love? She said: "I love
Because I love to love."

Love is simple—sweet,
Love is simply sweet,
Mystery it never was,
I love, thou lovest, she loves,
Just because—ah! just because!

HE'S GOING TO CROAK

Oh, spring-time passed the mill dam by,
Her feet were full of pep,
Big Bull Frog roused him from his sleep,
As soon's he heard her step.
There was an airhole in the ice,
Through it his nose did poke,
A whisper reached the angel's ear,
Great Scott, I'm goin' to croak!

I don't know how it is that I
Do feel so awful queer,
It comes upon me always at
This season of the year.
It seems to hit me like the flu,
A sort of annual joke,
I feel it coming on me now,
O Lord, I'm goin' to croak!

A lizard rubbed his abdomen,
A muskrat rubbed his back,
A crawfish took his temperature,
But still, alas, alack!
He felt the fit was comin' on,
His heart was almost broke,
He drank his boneset tea and sighed,
Ah me, I'm goin' to croak!

The straddle bug did give him pills,
His missus bathed his feet,
A kind mud turtle fed him squills,
And rolled him in a sheet,
But still he moaned, "I'll croak, I'll croak,"
And they were so provoked,
When suddenly, it makes me laugh,
He, he, he, he, he croaked!

A CONTRAST

The sweet hoar frost lies white, all chaste and virgin,
The bearded mosses on the trees are grey,
Jack Frost—behold! he is God's trusted surgeon—
Hath carved the cankers from His world away.
A little world of old dead worlds symbolic,
A little world so old and yet so new,
See yonder 'neath the moon the rabbits frolic,
And from that oak a great owl whoops "To-whoo!"

And this is near a city, by a village,
Thronged with voices and all ringed with men,
Belted in summer time with fields of tillage,
But—here the little foxes have their den;
I come to-night to bring my pound of suet,
I'll put it in the crotches of the trees,
It costs me money—but I'll never rue it—
To-morrow it will glad my chickadees.

I've buckwheat in my pockets—I will scatter
Upon the frost, and when the night is gone,
My squirrels and my bobwhites they will chatter
About it when they find it with the dawn;
Seeking a name for it, they'll call it "Luckwheat,"
But this my charity is long's 'tis broad,
The foxes and the owls do scorn my buckwheat,
Despising me they seek their meal from God!

A fox darts through the woods as 'tis his habit,
He's bearing home a very toothsome hen,
I hear a scream—Sis Owl hath pounced a rabbit,
I think I'll hie me to the haunts of men.
The haunts of men and stand and watch them killing
With sword and bomb, making obscene the sod,
And while I stand and watch the crude blood spilling,
I wonder do they seek their meal from God!

THE LITTLE FEET

I'd tramped the snowy landscape o'er,
Then homeward I did go,
And there I saw before my door,
Small footprints in the snow;
Her little feet had come and gone,
Oh, wan and empty day!
Her little feet had come and gone,
Had come and gone away.

A sudden sun the snowdrifts kissed,
Then came a wind and rain,
Those footmarks faded into mist,
They'll never come again!
Those little feet have come and gone,
They could not, would not stay,
Those little feet have come and gone,
Have come and gone away!

What message did she bring to me,
Upon those little feet?
Surely it could only be
An errand kind and sweet;
And oh, those feet had come and gone,
My heart sank with dismay,
Those little feet had come and gone,
Had come and gone away.

Dear March come in with storm and sleet,
And blow, ye wild winds, blow,
Then come again, dear little feet,
And walk upon my snow;
Come back again, shy little feet,
Some sunny winter day,
Come back again, dear little feet,
And never go away.

THEY ARE GOING, GOING, GOING

The landscape looks so strange,
When an old-time landmark goes,
The eyes, bewildered, range,
Where once its outlines rose;
It always leaves a gap,
A black spot on the map,
The world hath met mishap,
When an old-time landmark goes.

Was it a tree—a pine—
A shanty on a hill,
Was it a castle fine,
Was it an old grist mill?
It matters not; I pause,
To mourn for it because
The world's not what it was
When an old-time landmark goes.

Was it a good old man,
To all the country dear,
Who when our land began
Her great career, lived here?
No more we'll see his face,
Last of a noble race,
Ah! none can take his place
When an old-time landmark goes.

One landmark ever goes,
Of all landmarks the pet,
One landmark ever goes,
But still is with us yet;
The good old Union Jack,
Doth lead the brave attack,
Around the world and back
The glorious landmark goes.

FURTHER ON

We seek a safe spot, but it's always
Further on;
In the deep, dark forest hallways,
Further on;
With our very best endeavor
We may reach, may gain it never,
For the peace we seek is ever
Further on.

All that I have loved lies yonder,
Further on;
O'er their heads the dark skies ponder,
Further on;
Where sunset with the evening blends,
Where incense from the fields ascends,
There's where my weary journey ends,
Further on.

There be problems—I will solve them
Further on;
Shadows shall no more involve them,
Further on;
Toil and hardship have distressed me,
Little joy hath ever blessed me,
I will sit me down and rest me,
Further on.

Little children that I hope for—
Further on:
Little forms I blindly grope for—
Further on;
Home, a cradle and a nest place,
Bright and dear and sweet—the best place,
Soon I'll find a peaceful rest place,
Further on.

I can hear a river rushing,
Further on;
I can hear a dear voice thrushing,
Further on;
Though the threatened night is falling,
I can see a light enthralling,
I can hear my loved ones calling,
Further on.

GET TOGETHER

Keen-eyed, the watcher, squatting on his haunches,
Alone and high upon the Holy Wall,
Doth hear the roaring of the far-off conches,
Doth hear the throbbing throated trumpets call;
Afar across the pastures and the forest,
Across the measureless and the immense,
He hears the awful chant in thunder chorused,
"To your tents, O Israel, to your tents."

Since time began and first the earth was green,
There age hath been a tyrant or a botcher,
But ever on the Holy Wall has been
A stern and silent figure called the Watcher;
To-day he hears no idle boasts nor vaunting,
Across the measureless and the immense,
He hears afar an angry people chanting,
"To your tents, O Israel, to your tents."

Once on a time, I heard a storied fable,
Of venturous Sinbad struggling to be free,
And tho' he failed four moons and was unable,
At last he threw the Old Man of the Sea.
The Watcher watched him as he watches now,
Across the measureless and the immense,
And he can hear them shouting far away, I trow,
"To your tents, O Israel, to your tents."

And on his wand the patient Watcher notches,
And numbers all the days the people call;
He, squatting on his haunches, ever watches,
Aloft and lone, upon the Holy Wall.
His eyes look out with vision high and soaring,
Across, the measureless and the immense,
And through the air he hears the anthem pouring
"To your tents, O Israel, to your tents!"

ANOTHER WORLD

Not they alone who fell and died
When into battle hurled,
For we have, every one of us,
Entered another world!

Not one of ye has thought of this,
The consequence, the cause,
But know ye that the world that is
Is not the world that was?

That strange old world we used to know,
Ere that first battle day,
That strange old world of weal and woe,
That world hath passed away!

What boots it if our earth shall climb,
The brighter worlds among?
In God's great hay rope ladder we
Are but a grassy rung!

And now in space we sway and swerve,
Smitten with terrors oft,
Don't look down—you will lose your nerve,
O brothers, look aloft!

IT DONE ME GOOD

Yesterday I went to church,
In calm and prayerful mood;
I heard the same old story, and
I know it done me good.

The choir was pretty rocky—was
A rather noisy brood;
I put up with the crash because
I felt it done me good.

"Nearer, My God to Thee," is hard
To spoil with singing crude,
"All people that on Earth do Dwell,"
Has always done me good.

"Come Ye before Him and Rejoice,"
My very soul imbued;
They couldn't spoil "Old Hundred," and
I know it done me good.

The curate was an aw-haw-haw
Ecclesiastic dude,
He called her Mawy Magdalene—aw!
But still it done me good.

He cackled through a sermon that
Nobody understood,
He padded out his little theme,
And yet it done me good.

The only story ever told
That mountebank or dude,
Or blatherskite can never spoil,
And that's what done me good!

THE PILGRIMAGE

I'm going to cross two thousand years,
(How oft I've counted them),
Until I come to smiles and tears,
In far-off Bethlehem.
My heart shall thrill with fine delight,
When that dear land is found,
Where shepherds watch their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground.

I want to see the stable where
The lonely travellers are,
For this—all this I'll do and dare,
I want to see the Star.
I'll see the bright supernal light,
I'll hear the heavenly sound,
Where shepherds watch their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground.

I want to see the manger crib
Within the stable dim,
I wish to touch the bonnie bib
His Mother made for Him.
Outside with white celestial light
The pasture fields are crowned,
Where shepherds watch their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground.

Three kings they bring to Bethlehem
Gifts that no purse can buy,
Priceless pearls and many a gem,
But not a thing have I.
A light shines from the highest height,
A beggar I am found,
Where shepherds watch their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground.

A DAY DREAM

Methinks that I can hear them churning
Outside the kitchen cellar way;
Methinks I see the old yarn turning
A perfumed green this splendid day.

Methinks I see the pet lamb jumping,
A splendid athlete, he, I trow;
Methinks I see our Thomas pumping
Some water for the brindle cow.

Methinks I see the bran mash mixing;
The heifer smells it from afar;
Methinks I see the farmer fixing
Fences where the willows are.

Methinks I hear them set the table;
A feast no royal king would scorn;
"Dish up the 'taters quick's you're able,
And Nelly, blow the dinner horn."

The men troop out from barn and meadow,
Their faces shine like newest silk;
They stop beside the cellar doorway
And drink the sweet fresh buttermilk.

The old man says an old-time prayer,
The knives and forks in chorus fly;
The perfumed parsnips fill the air,
And Nelly passes round the pie.

LADY LILAC

Her perfume floats upon me in a perfect avalanche,
"Glory Hallelujah!" shouts the tree toad on the branch.
She whispers to the silent night that chilly days are dead,
And the poorest little maiden has a bouquet by her bed.

Ah! the pretty little maiden, with the early summer blent,
Wears a bunch of Lady Lilac on her bosom innocent;
Many lovely blossoms blossom in the summer, spring and fall,
But the long-loved Lady Lilac is the sweetest of them all.

Barefoot Lady Lilac is in clover to her knees,
"Glory Hallelujah!" is the chorus of the bees;
The meanest little duffer in the whole of Christendom,
May for a dainty favor to dear Lady Lilac come.

For she is what was promised us throughout the month of May,
And God is good, no matter what the evil ones may say—
Rarer plants may blossom in the rich and castled hall,
But my darling Lady Lilac is the fairest of them all.

Lucky little baby that you were born to-day,
"Glory Hallelujah" I can hear the angels say,
For your birthday will be splendid in the wondrous years to come.

You will see the lilacs pluming, you will hear the wild bees hum.

The splendid Lady Lilac will a birthday present bring;
You will hear the tree toad joking, you will hear the cat-bird sing;
Of all the flowers that perfume fling, when June time evenings fall,
My sweetheart, Lady Lilac, is the dearest of them all.

The lissom Lady Lilac lifts her tall and graceful crest;
"Glory Hallelujah!" sighs the cat-bird in her nest;
A little maid is dying, her half-starved life is spilt,
But a dozen plumes of lilac hide the old and shabby quilt.

Her thin and quivering nostrils seek the sweetest of the bloom,
And she hears an angel fluttering in the silence of the room;
She sees, as she is standing on the golden river's edge,
That heaven is surrounded by a lovely lilac hedge.
Of all the flowers that blossom in the summer time or fall,
The dainty Lady Lilac is the sweetest of them all.

THE BULLFROG

They may talk of the bird with plumage blue,
And the bird with the bosom red;
They herald the spring with the song they sing
And tell us old winter is dead;
But I bet on the bird without feathers on,
The safest prophet is he,
When he sings, "Ker-munk—ker-dunk—ker-flunk!"
Down in the marshy sea.

He isn't as sweet as the robin red
Nor as fair as the birdie blue;
But I'll bet my dust on his wise old head,
For his prophecies aye come true;
No feathers are stuck in his blunt old tail,
Ah, a common old codger is he,
As he sings, "Ker-flug!—ker-flug! ker-slug!"
Down by the willowed sea.

The straddle bug isn't a patch on him,
And the groundhog looks like a fool;
When he hears the song that is fresh and strong,
Down in the swampy pool.
He's loaded right up with horse-sense, high,
A wise old snoozer is he,
As he sings, "Ker-flog!—ker-mog!—ker-slog!"
Down in the cat-tailed sea.

Oh, he never gets left, for he waits till it comes,
And he knows the genuine thing;
When he sees by its way it has come to stay,
He hollers aloud, "It's spring!"
Oh, his back it is green—his belly is drab,
A comical party is he,
As he sings, "Ker-glung!—ker-bung—ker-slung!"
Down in the flag-filled sea.

And that is why I am satisfied quite
That summer will never be near,
Till out from the bog, from the top of a log,
The mellowing song you hear.
He slips no cog—does the old bullfrog,
Oh, a dear little lu-lu is he,
As he sings, "Ker-glunk!—ker-slunk!—ker-plunk!
Down in the marshy sea.

A VILLAGE IDYLL

Homesick to-night! My heart is sick
And as in days of yore,
I walk again the village street,
I see the village store,
The same old-timer cod-fish,
Is dangling near the door.

I hear the village joker joke,
I hear the answering roar,
He's cracked those hoary-headed jokes
These twenty years or more;
Yet I could laugh at them again
Until my sides were sore.

Before that self-same window, there
I used to stand and feed
My boyish eyes on candy wealth,
For candy was my creed;
And if I had a copper, O,
Then I was rich indeed.

I sit in awe upon a box,
My hands upon my knees,
And hear the farmers as they talk
Of politics and cheese;
Of horses, plows, the weather, crops,
And topics such as these.

Till all at once a vision bright
Stands in the open door;
Her face is sweet, her feet are bare.
Her little frock is tore;
My boyhood's darling, ah, my heart!
I'll see that face no more.

THE OLD COWBELL

Bossy, it's spring, you'll soon be free,
Six months of gladness are yours, I hope,
All winter you've been a care to me,
But now I'm cutting your well-worn rope;
But 'round your neck a circle I twine,
You cannot hide, you're always mine,
At home or down on the dim side line
I'll hear the cow bell.

The boys will search when evening falls,
Barelegged they'll trail thro' brier and weed;
They know the green and bosky stalls,
The place where the straying cattle feed;
The boys will hunt at the close of day,
And listen, listen amid their play,
Bossy, Bossy, what gives you away?
The cowbell.

The mother stands with her well-scrubbed pail,
And shadows her anxious eyes,
So out of the swamp, with a muddy tail,
See the family cow arise;
She's milked, and maiden and robin bird,
Wink at each other and say no word;
And down in the swamp the ring is heard
Of the cowbell.

Many and many and many a man
Who owns his multi-thousands, now,
Was raised on the good old-fashioned plan,
And lived on the milk of the family cow.
Mush and milk made his brains and bones,
Her butter bought him his building stones,
No wonder he loves the tinkling tones
Of the cowbell!

ROBERT BURNS

It's Burns' anniversary, or near it, I am told.
An hundred weary years or more have o'er his ashes rolled.
The man who taught the people how to smile and how to weep
Is dead? I don't believe it; he's even not asleep.
To-night, outside my window, where the bull-mouthed blizzards blow,
He's singing, singing, singing—I can hear him in the snow.
I fain would ask him in to sit beside my cheerful fire.
My Pharisee gets angry—the proposal lights his ire,
He says: "Twould never, never do! What would the public think?
It's rumored in society that Robert used to drink!
Ah! friends, he's gone a hundred years—a long, long time to dwell
For wine and woman and a song down deep in muckle hell."
I grabbed the croaking Pharisee and flung him through the door,
His sanctimonious features, may I see them never more!
I have no fear for Robert Burns; a noble life was his,
I want to spend Eternity where the splendid Plowman is—
No matter where that place may be, I'm very little carin',

E'en though it be a furnace where they'll roast me like a herrin'.
The Pharisees will not be there; he'd give the rascals fits!
Wherever Robbie makes his home there are no hypocrites.
Where'er the place may be, I know the time is never long,
There's pretty girls, a cup of wine, and many a noble song!
He's got a farm up somewhere outside the golden toon,
Where he needna ploo the mousie oot nor ploo the daisy doon;
Where Moylie raises decent lambs that do her teaching proud,
Afar from Holy Wullie an' Holy Wullie's crowd.
The angels ken him rightly, this tenant on their fairm,
For Rob's a man for a' that, they ken he'll do nae hairm.
Where'er his little home is built, where'er that fairm may be,
O, Robert Burns, I'd like to spend Eternity with thee!
They've built you splendid monuments; they're towering aboon,
You'll see them there an' yonder in almost every toon;
But long before the people appreciated thee,
Sad and broken-hairted you laid you doon to dee.
You asked and prayed for oatcake when sickness numbed your brain,
And then a gen'rous people smiled, and handed you a stane.

You cried aloud for bannocks, you asked the folk for scones,
They gave you chunks of marble and shafts of heartless bronze.
Man, dear! you need no statues, no monuments on high,
For in our loyal hearts, dear Rab, your name shall never die.
The spirits of your lovers before your shrine keep watch,
You leavened all the nations an' you civilized the Scotch!
To-night your land o' Scotland is the proudest land on earth
Because she rocked your cradle—is the country of your birth.
Come ben the hoose, my Robbie; the night outside is dree;
Make yerself at hame, my lad, an' sing this sang with me:
"Shall auld acquaintance be forgot an' never brought to min'?
Shall auld acquaintance be forgot for the days of auld lang syne?"

BACK TO THE LAND

Lo! I am grieved to think in countries foreign
My folk—mine own folk—toil,
Seeking the cheap denarius and the florin
In some cold alien soil.
I see my people in a town that's grudging
To fill a work-worn hand,
Some day I hope to see my people trudging
Back to the land!

The thorns, the thickets, in drear deserts bleed them,
Those deserts where they roam,
I pray that they come back again, we need them,
The old farm and the home.
Let's go and seek them, a great flag before us,
Behind the village band;
We'll shake the slums and alleys with a chorus,
Back to the land!

Tho' every day I kill—'tis weeds I'm killing,—
In lands where I was born,
For I am part and parcel of the land I'm tilling,
A cousin to the corn;
And when I close mine eyes on this old planet,
Carve on my tomb a hand,
Pointing to Mother Earth with fingers granite,
"Back to the land!"

THE SEMAPHORES OF GOD

I've winged my way, by night and day,
And many a sea I've crossed,
In broad daylight or darksome night;
I know I can't get lost,
My wings I try, and fearless fly,
On trackless pathways broad,
For every star in the sky afar
Is a semaphore of God.

The people say we find our way,
With instinct for a guide,
And through the dark, without a mark
Upon our pathway wide.
It is not so, for as we go,
The planets smile and nod,
And every star in the sky afar
Is a semaphore of God.

With love He hath defined our path,
We cannot go astray,
And every light, by day or night,
Doth guide us on our way;
The planets shine, with eyes benign,
Like daisies in the sod;
And every star in heaven afar
Is a semaphore of God.

In storms and calms, from poles to palms,
My way is ever plain;
When summer shines from palms to pines
I journey back again;
The Southern Cross, the Northern Bear,
Are signals bright and broad;
Each star in air—no matter where—
Is a semaphore of God.

SALUTE

Trumpets with martial strain,
Brass and drum and flute,
He'll never march with us again,
Salute!

The flag upon his coffin lid
Eloquent tho' mute,
His helmet by red roses hid,
Salute!

The triple volleys roar,
A wild, a sad tribute,
He'll march with us no more, no more,
Salute!

The brassy bugle thralls;
Soldier of high repute,
Sleep till Gabriel's trumpet calls,
Salute!

That we were decadent on land and sea,
This lie thou did'st refute,
And generations yet unborn shall thee
Salute!

THEY MEANT WELL.

I walked with Virgil through the fields celestial,
Folks I saw I'd known in lands terrestial,
"How come they here?" I asked, "this dubious brood,
I used to know them and they aint no good."
"Nevertheless," quoth Virgil, as we drew near,
"'These people meant well, and that's why they're here."

"But, Heavens above, ole man," says I demurely,
"That aint the way to get to Heaven, surely?"
"Nevertheless," quoth Virgil," all their lifetime
In poverty and dirt, in stress and strife time;
They bungled, blundered and they sinned, I fear,
But still they always meant well, and behold, they're
here!"

"But Holy Mackinaw," I says, "it seems unfair,
These folk I see around me ne'er got anywhere,
'Cept into scrapes or jails, soup kitchens and the like,
Explain the mystery further, for the love of Mike."
"There is no mystery in it," and his voice was clear,
"These people meant well, and that's why they're here."

I gazed about me and then I says, "By hedges,
Yonder's a gink who always broke his pledges;
I wouldn't trust one of these favored people,
As fur's I could throw St. Paul's Church by the steeple!"
"Nevertheless," quoth Virgil, and he shed a tear,
"These people meant well, and that's why they're here."

"The Lord is merciful and them He doth enhance,
Who'd ever do the right thing if they got the chance,
Or if they had the strength—but down on earth,
Their poor thin blood was tainted at their birth;
Hither they come, an ever-moving tide,
'Lord, Lord, we meant well!' And His gates swing wide!"

A DESPERATE REMEDY

Abou Ben Had'em (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
He rolled him over and his form he eased;
He fixed his pillow—then, behold he sneezed!
He rose in terror; like a poisoned mouse,
Went crawling belly-achin' through the house,
He sneezed some more, and then he had a clue,
He said: "By jingo, I have got the flu!"
He called—his household angel quickly came,
With lamp in hand, a wise and portly dame,
She gave him bark—she gave him boneset tea,
But naught relieved his fearful miseree.

She gave him stuff that made poor Abou sweat,
She rubbed him down, but still he suffered yet,
A red-hot poultice, too, his skin did sear,
And Abou lay and hollered most severe.
She gave him pills and squills, both thin and thick,
But still her patient was most awful sick.
And must dear Abou die? O, fearful thought!
She got some whiskey and she made it hot;
She filled up Abou—filled him to the throat,
She made him fuller than an alley goat.
He rose and dressed himself—he left his bed,
And then he painted half the city red.

He walloped six policemen—all hands present,
Were quite convinced that he was convalescent.
He put the neighborhood upon the bum,
Until it looked like parts of Belgium.

L'Envoi.

Next day beneath the magisterial crest
Abou Ben Had'em's name led all the rest.

CO, BOSS, CO!

The village cow's untethered—free
She's in the swamps below,
And there six months she'll likely be
For summer's weal or woe;
When shadows fall—the west intense
With gathered gold's aglow,
The village urchin on a fence,
Sings—"Co, boss, co!"

A mother calls, she's speaking now,
The barefoot urchins hark,
"Go forth, and bring me home the cow,
Before the night grows dark."
The even time is falling,
The urchins in a row,
Sit on the rail fence calling,
"Co, boss, co!"

They see the brush vibrating,
They hear the willows crash,
She knows for her is waiting
A nice bran mash!
O'er field and fen and forest,
She hears the music flow,
A happy anthem chorused:
"Co, boss, co!"

A song it is to equal,
The robins' rare delight,
And it hath got a sequel,
Bread and milk to-night!
O'er pasture field and commons,
The echoes come and go,
And bossy hears the summons:
"Co, boss, co!"

She's sugar—she is salt and tea,
She's medicine, I know,
She fills the baby's bottle wee,
She buys the calico;
From youngest to the oldest,
Her people love her so,
She's worth her weight in gold dust,
"Co, boss, co!"

MY MOTHERS OF MEN

I've got a beautiful herd of cows,
So gentle and benign;
Each one with pride my life endows,
For every joy is mine.
And folk do come 'most every day
To see my friend, and then
I ope the farmyard gates and say:
"Behold my mothers of men!"

For infants cling and gasp for breath
To their unseen garment's hem—
How many babes would starve to death
Tell me, if not for them?
When mother's sick and breasts run dry
And hearts grow cold—O then,
They come in crowds to my farm and cry:
"Where are the mothers of men?"

Sleek and fat are my beautiful cows,
They're happy all the day;
They rustle the straw and nibble the browse
And sample my clover hay.
The best that grows on my meadow sod
Is theirs and welcome, when
I know that they are sent of God
To help the mothers of men.

I fill their racks with clover hay,
Happy I make their lives;
They know no harm nor fear all day,
My modest mothers and wives.
With buckets and bottle folk come to me,
I give to all, and then
I point to my herd in ecstasy:
"Behold my mothers of men!"

Look at their pillows so soft and warm
Thick in each comfy stall,
I keep my darlings safe from harm,
For oh, I love them all!
As good as gold, as soft as silk,
When days are dark it's then
My darlings give their precious milk
To help the mothers of men!

HE SHALL THAW TO DEATH

Who's that a fumblin' at the latch?
Whist, iz't? It sounds like Old Scratch,
What you doin' ther' this time o' night?
Giving the missus an' the kids a fright,
Who air you, ennyways. Who? Hey?
Speak louder, can't hear what you say;
Uh, huh! That's fine, that's very fine,
I like to hear you snuffle, beg an' whine;
"I'm ole John Frost,
I'm lost, lost, lost;
There's a chinook comin' near,
It fills my soul with fear,
Give me sawdust, give me straw,
There 's goin' to be a thaw."

Keep away, you ole vill'in,
I'd break yer whiskers fer a shillin',
Oh, children, get some rags,
Tear up these old bran bags,
Stuff the tags in every wee hole,
Pack the door jamb, plug the keyhole,
The chinook John will gnaw to death,
Aint it glorious—aint it fine,
To hear that tough ole sinner whine;
"I'm ole John Frost,
I'm lost, lost, lost,
There's a chinook on its way,
It fills me with dismay.
Give me sawdust, give me straw,
There's goin' to be a thaw,
Aw, aw, aw!
There's going to be a thaw."

Oh, children, don't you hear him?
Now, children, do you fear him?
Chinook's comin' on the double,
To-morrow John will be a puddle;
Oh, John will soon be mostly slush,
Mush, gush, flush, tush, hush!
Isn't John an awful calf,
Give him the laugh, give him the laugh!
Oh, ole John Frost,
Now you're double-crossed;
The chinook you will gnaw to death,
Soon you're goin' to thaw to death.
There's going to be a thaw,
Oh, haw, haw, haw,
There's goin' to be a thaw,
Oh, haw, haw, haw!

A CROP OF WHIRLWINDS

They tore the land with shot and shell,
  They harrowed it with guns,
They got a foreman out of hell,
  To farm it for the Huns.
They sowed the wind—they sowed the wind
  Behind a smoking plough,
Bring hither scythe to whet and grind;
  They'll reap the whirlwind now.

Never a crop so great as this,
  Cultured at such a cost,
Never was such a crop, I wis,
  Since Paradise was lost.
Generations wet with tears,
  And millions yet unborn,
Shall bend their backs a thousand years
  To cut that cursed corn.

Ye put the yoke upon the necks
  Of infants in the womb,
Before they breathe their lives are wrecks,
  Their birth hour is their doom.
Before the grain was set in shocks,
  Ere yet the sheaves were shorn,
Ye clamped a muzzle on the ox
  That treadeth out the corn.

Ye soaked the fallow lands with tears,
Then trampled it to mud,
Ye sowed the wind these awful years,
And nourished it with blood.
Across these stubble fields immense
So ghostly, weird and lean,
Cold poverty and pestilence
Like ruthless Goths shall glean.

How can ye winnow what ye reap
Upon your threshing floor?
The muzzled ox wades belly deep
In rushing tides of gore.
Behold, the mills of God grind slow,
They grind exceeding small,
This whirlwind that we reap—I know
They will not grind at all!

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

I never loved thee as I love thee now, dear moon,
For but a few short hours ago what we call noon,
Thy tender beams on far-off Vimy Ridge did lave,
A lonely and a sacred spot; the grave,
Where they had hidden in the earth my joy,
He was a soldier and he was my boy.

And can'st thou cast a shadow yet with that small tree,
That maple tree, a little gift from me,
Which kindly hands did plant there at his feet?
Tell me, is it in leaf and is it sweet,
And doth it rustle when the winds do blow,
You saw it but a few short hours ago?

It's roots shall creep down thro' that foreign mould,
His hands shall grasp them, those dear hands shall hold
All Canada in their clasp, he will be near
The home he fought for, that he held so dear;
And he will whisper, "It's my mother's tree,
The loyal token that she sent to me."

On Calvary's hill you saw that scene of woe,
Where are its mourners' tears? Dried long ago!
And I some day, I, too, shall cease to weep,
And gladly lay me down and fall asleep;
His tree I'll enter, I will crave that boon,
Together we will guard our soldier's grave, O moon!

THE JUST AND THE UNJUST

I know, indeed I'm sure, my Lord will come again to me,
When the drear season of long waiting's through,
And then I know my Lord He will explain to us
Why the rain rains on the just and on the unjust, too.
So I listen for His horn,
I hearken for His drum,
For down through the fallow and out from the corn
I know my Lord will come!

In some glad day to come I know my Lord will walk with us,
Our souls from weary problems He will woo,
And strolling in the fields He will show to us
Why the rain rains on the just and on the unjust, too.
I listen for His horn,
I hearken for His drum,
For down through the fallow and out from the corn
Behold, my Lord will come.

Oh, yes, I know my Lord will come once more to us,
From out yon willows whence that robin flew,
And he'll explain it o'er and o'er and o'er to us,
Why the rain rains on the just and on the unjust, too.
So I listen for His horn,
I hearken for His drum,
For down through the fallow and forth from the corn
Mine own dear Lord will come!

AS TO THE SNAKE

To-day, in a sheltered corner
Where the sweet sky warmed the soil,
I saw a little garter snake
Sunning his shining coil;
And I thought of the awful Scripture verse,
So crowded full of woe,
The piteous and the primal curse:
"On thy belly shalt thou go!"

Oh, what a doom! Oh, what a curse
For any living thing!
A fate methinks could not be worse—
No foot, no fin, no wing.
One would think that dreary fate
Would seal his hopes below;
This doom might well exterminate:
"On thy belly shalt thou go!"

But the pretty garter snake, he smiled:
"Your sympathy's well meant;
Although the curse is on me piled,
You see, I am content.
I don't regret the primal curse
Of ancient days—ah, no!
I bless to-day the Scripture verse:
'On thy belly shalt thou go!'

"For I'm better off than the bullfrog,
I'm better off than the rat,
I'm better off than the mud turtle,
I'm better off than the bat.
I have no feet for trap or snare,
No wings to feel a blow;
It was a blessing unaware—
'On thy belly shalt thou go!'

"I haven't a leg to stand on,
But that don't make me squirm;
I'm a blame sight better off, I think,
Than the thousand-legged worm.
And when I get a move on
You cannot call me slow;
I make some rapid motions when
On my belly I do go.

"Were it proposed to furnish legs
And feet to mine and me,
Then me and mine would vote it down
By a big majority.
'Till the crack of doom—till time be spent,
Be it for weal or woe,
Footless and wingless, but content,
On our bellies we will go!"

THE TREK OF THE WILD GEESE

And now they come forth,
From the ice-fettered North,
The dauntless and beautiful things.
On wide wind-walloping wings,
For a moment high over
The icelands they hover,
On anthemed wide swirling wings.
At the first flush of dawn,
The great gander cried "On,"
To his noisy high harem he clings,
Those graceful and beautiful things.

The cries of the ganders enthrall,
Their wild wives answer the call,
On wide, wind-walloping wings,
The faithful and beautiful things;
No harm can betide them,
The planets do guide them,
They journey with never a fall;
From light into night,
From night into light,
I hark to their thunderous wings,
Their wide, wind-walloping wings,
O beautiful, beautiful things!

The gong of the gander enthralls,
Swiftly they answer his calls;
They're away! they're away! they're away!
With a thunder of thunderful wings,
With a rush of their wonderful wings,
O splendid and exquisite things!

THE IMMORTALS

In a tumble-down old shanty,
Behind the station small,
With art—his art was scanty,
He'd carved his name—that's all!
His good old jack-knife did it—why?
Because he did not want to die.

In meditation as I strolled
Thro' yonder little park,
Upon an ancient tree were scrolled
Initials in the bark;
And he who did it, did it, why?
Because he did not want to die.

No one cares and no one knows,
He's gone and gone for aye,
But when his jack-knife he did close
You might have heard him say:
"I crave to live for ever,"—why?
Because he did not want to die.

They carve their names upon a stone,
By some high hidden tarn,
Or hand rail of a bridge or lone
Bare breastbeam of a barn;
A door, a window sill, and—why?
Because they did not want to die.

And this is in us from our birth,
We want the world to give
Us immortality on earth,
And tho' we die yet live,
We wish to be remembered—why?
Pshaw! which of us would want to die?

THE DAWN COMETH

The winter winds do fume and fuss,
The tempest cries elate,
But sweeter days shall come to us
If we but wait.

Every day doth bring more near
The south wind's promise sweet,
And in the distance we can hear
Dear tinkling feet.

Soon amid the new leaves, hush,
The birds shall sing at dawn,
And in the secret underbrush,
Shall sleep the fawn.

And we shall hear when fades the light
And all is calm and still,
Sing in the concert halls of night
The whip-poor-will.

The maple trees lift up their heads,
Their sluggish pulses leap,
The lilies in their little beds,
Stir in their sleep.

His promise doth with us abide,
Why should we shrink and quail?
His springtime and his harvest tide
Shall never fail.

THE RIVER OF GOD

The river of God is full of water,
And its depths are never dim,
With sweet and life-giving water,
'Tis full to the very brim;
It springs from the heavenly high lands,
To freshen the grass and trees,
On a thousand thousand islands,
In a thousand thousand seas.

The river of God is full of water,
It flows thro' all space serene,
It splashes against Arcturus
And keepeth Orion clean;
Thro' the great square of Pegasus
Its sparkling torrents flow,
And it floods the sunless places
Where the long-lost comets go.

The river of God is full of water,
And in it the stars do dip,
And the mightiest sun Canopus
Doth float on it like a ship,
Its depth and width are bewildering,
Its currents do leap and toss,
But oh, I've seen little children
Safely wading across.

Oh, the river of God is full of water,
Of water there is no dearth,
There's water far above Vega,
There's water under the earth.
Hell will be put to new uses,
We'll flood it, the time is near,
God's people are digging the sluices,
And Christ is the engineer.

THE TROUBADOUR

The good old dog will wag his tail
When I go home.
And Sis will drop her milking pail
When I go home.
No matter if it's dark and late,
Those I love will stand and wait,
And watch beside the old farm gate,
When I go home.

The dearest friend I've got on earth,
When I go home,
Will lay the table, sweep the hearth,
When I go home.
She'll hold my hands and kiss my face,
With all a mother's gentle grace,
And I will take my old-time place,
When I go home.

The feather bed is soft and sweet,
When I go home,
'Twill nest my head, my heart, my feet,
When I go home.
I'll sink into the pillows deep,
I'll pray the Lord my soul to keep,
And then I'll sleep and sleep and sleep,
When I go home.

GENTLE SPRING

I sit with my feet in the oven,
My nose close up to the pipe,
I'm as jokey as any spring robin,
That's fresh and is rather unripe.

I still wear my ear muffs and cap,
I still to my overcoat cling,
Still feel it my duty to sit
And warble of beautiful spring.

But my warble is husky and harsh,
And my melody suffers from cracks;
For the froglets down there in the marsh
Are shivering with humps on their backs.

Of my country I'm awfully proud,
So I close to the cooking stove cling,
And lilt, like a dog in a shroud
Of the coming of beautiful spring.

The neck of old winter's giraffic,
It reaches far out into May;
O, come with your sonnet seraphic,
Sweet robin, come early, I pray.

But be sure and put overshoes on,
Bring an overcoat over your wing,
And a bag full of mufflers and socks,
When you herald Ethereal Spring.

But still will I manfully sit,
While I close to the cooking stove cling;
And sing like a frosted tomtit
Of gentle Ethereal Spring.

THE DYING YEAR

Look yonder at the dying year,
The dying year,
So naked, chill, so bleak and drear,
So dark and drear;
Across the lake, cold as a stone,
The drowsing leaves like dust are thrown,
And all the mourning marsh makes moan,
The marsh makes moan.

A lofting henhawk scales the sky,
He climbs the sky,
Circling his winding way on high,
His way on high;
Leaving a land so cold and wet,
Cleaving a sky, where stars ne'er set,
Climbing a topless minaret,
A minaret.

The dripping sheep forsake the hill,
The winding hill,
The pasture fields are stark and still,
So stark and still;
The crows they seek the swampy halls,
Where storm nor tempest ne'er enthralls,
To-night they'll wear their cedar shawls,
Their cedar shawls.

And they, like us, do bear in mind,
They bear in mind,
The dear, dead June we left behind,
So far behind;
But through the snow wraith and the rain,
O'er marsh and mountain, wood and plain,
To us our June shall come again,
Shall come again.

And should we fall before the morn,
To-morrow's morn,
Cut from our branch as leaves are shorn,
As leaves are shorn;
Beneath a higher, brighter noon,
Below a whiter, lighter moon,
We'll go and seek another June,
Another June.

But we must wade through drifted snow,
Through trackless snow,
O'er pelted plains, through storms we'll go,
Through storms we'll go;
Before we reach the flow'ry way,
Before we greet the April day,
And see afar the land of May,
The land of May.

THE GARDEN WHERE THE RHUBARB GROWS

There's a garden in the country where the robin builds her nest,
A garden full of mem'ries and a rose;
It's a plain old-fashioned garden where the wearied heart can rest,
It's the garden where the rhubarb grows.

There are apple trees and peach trees, a great big Concord vine,
A plum tree with its fruit as black as sloes;
It's a garden where the Mayday sun most lovingly doth shine,
It's the garden where the rhubarb grows.

Oh, the sun peeps in at morning, he takes a peep at eve,
Lovingly he lingers ere he goes;
He seems to me reluctant the homely place to leave,
The garden where the rhubarb grows.

And the birds they sing so sweetly in the big crab apple tree,
Ragtime, chants and lyrics, and some prose;
It's music of the loveliest and as happy as can be,
In the garden where the rhubarb grows.

The anglels brought a baby down one misty morn in May,
We found him laughing, where do you suppose?
No! not among the cabbages—but bonny, blithe and gay,
In the garden where the rhubarb grows.

There is no other spot on earth so full of peace and pie,
No other spot so free from pains and woes;
I beg that you will bury me when I lay me down to die
In the garden where the rhubarb grows.

BELGIUM'S HISTORIC AUTUMNS

Like the leaves of Autumn swept in fury by the gales,
Like the leaves of Autumn without number;
Like the leaves of Autumn from far forest lands and swales,
In the night they woke me from my slumber.
They came pounding, they came bounding round my door!
They came thrilling, they came shrilling,
They came killing round my door!

My women fled before them as leaves flee from the gale,
Children died beneath them without number;
And all the world was wakened and all the world did wail,
For dead men did the sodden earth encumber.
They came roaring, they came soaring round my door!
They came clattering, they came battering,
They came shattering round my door!

They came as thick as Autumn leaves fast driven by the gale,
Merciless to ruin and to ravage;
With empty hands I struck them, my empty hands did fail,
I only made the savages more savage!
They came thundering, they came blundering round my door,
They came booming, they came glooming,
They came fuming round my door.

Countless as the Autumn leaves, sore driven by the gale,
Each one beating on one like a hammer;
I wonder that I'm here alive to-day to tell the tale,
Deafened by the outcry and the clamor.
They came leaping, they came sweeping round my door,
They came shrieking, they came creaking,
They came sneaking round my door.

But now the wind hath changed, at last they flee before the gale,
Tattered, torn, blood-soaked are they and sodden;
My women folk come stealing back so ragged and so pale,
To find their little garden plots downtrodden;
They go brawling, they go crawling from my door,
They go yowling, they go howling,
They go scowling from my door!

And like the leaves of Autumn that are hunted by the gale,
They're fleeing from the fate that doth pursue them;
A million torn, distorted dead lie cumbering their trail,
God of Nations, was it Thou that slew them?
They go whining and repining from my door,
They go crying, they go sighing,
They go dying from my door.

THE WOODSEY SMELL

The perfumes of far Araby,
Are sweet, so learned travellers tell,
But there's a perfume dear to me,
The pleasant homely woodsey smell.

The wealth of woods where creepers cling,
Where buds of Balm of Gilead swell,
The wond'rous robe of early spring,
Is perfumed by the woodsey smell.

There's perfume in each hazel switch,
There's perfume in the growing leeks,
And I can smell the pignuts rich
That puff the cheery chipmunk's cheeks.

There's lichen on this old tree trunk,
Before the breeze each leaflet nods,
On yonder stump a bit of punk
Is burning incense to the gods.

Where last year's leaves are dank and deep,
The buds lift up their modest heads,
The flowers awaken from their sleep
And kick the blankets from their beds.

Ah! you can buy where'er you will
A bottled rose, but I know well

No cunning hand shall e'er distill
Or imitate the woodsey smell!

If you would breathe this perfume sweet,
That scents the trailing skirts of spring,
Forsake the office and the street
And hie thee where the bluebirds sing.

The pretty flower that died last fall
Comes from the tomb benign and brave,
And with her tender fingers small
She makes a cradle of her grave.

Her little blanket and her sheet
Are trimmed with lace that's all abloom,
The angels made them fair and sweet
And sprayed them with their own perfume.

Draw softly near and mark her well,
This little stranger in the sod,
For in her tender breath you smell
The far-off gardens of our God!

SEPTEMBER

Oh, the times are very diff'rent,
They fill us with amaze,
The long, cool nights,
The sweet, short days!

They rest our souls and bodies,
They fill us with delights,
The short, sweet days,
The long, cool nights.

What starts the grasses growing,
Along the blistered ways?
The long, cool nights,
The sweet, short days.

Oh! hear the gleeful turmots,
A song of joy upraise,
These long, cool nights
These short, sweet days.

The corn is very grateful,
It grows to wond'rous heights,
These sweet, short days,
These long, cool nights.

O come, ye grateful people,
And sound a note of praise,
For the long, cool nights,
And the sweet, short days.

THE TRILLIUMS

There's a beauty in the springtime woodland,
'Mid the basswoods where the trilliums grow,
There's a beauty in the dark-skinned hemlock
In the shadows where the trilliums blow;
There's a beauty in the leafing maples
On the hillside where the trilliums bide,
There's a beauty in the secret brush piles,
Where the modest little trilliums hide.

Oh, I love the wide, wet clearing
Where there's trilliums in the month of May
Oh, I love the sun-kissed hilltop
In the breezes where the trilliums sway;
There's music in a soft-voiced trillium,
Chanting in the early spring,
I'm the only one in all this wide world
Who has ever heard a trillium sing.

Oh, the marigolds they sing the alto,
And the pussy willows all complete,
The pines sing the basso profundo,
And the trilliums sing the air so sweet;
I listen to the chorus in the forest,
For I can understand their tongue,
I'm the only one in all this wide world
That ever heard that great song sung!

Oh, there's music 'mid the tall white poplars,
Where the singers entertainments give,
Oh, there's music in the vine twined thickets,
Where the solo singing trilliums live.
But there's sadness 'mid the glooming cedars,
'Mid the mosses where the trilliums sigh,
Oh, there's sorrow 'mid the troubled hemlocks,
In the shadows where the trilliums die.

THE OLD PROBLEM

Two men grinding at a mill
With well-trained fingers deft,
One was taken, in death lay still,
The other one was left.
Two brothers went to fight the Hun,
On Flanders' far-off plain,
One came home, but the other one
Will never come home again.

Two stars leaped into fields of space,
Twin stars they were, no doubt,
One shines to-night with splendid grace,
The other's light went out.
Two youths went forth to fight the Hun,
Across Atlantic's foam,
One came home, but the other one
Will never again come home.

Two trees, they stood in yonder dell,
Each higher than a mast,
One stands there yet, the other fell
Before the lightning's blast.
Two boys went forth to fight the Hun,
Where war's red banners burn,
One came home, the other one
Shall never more return.

Two doves were sent from out the ark
To find a patch of green,
One dove came back at fall of dark,
But one was no more seen.
Two lads went forth across the brine,
To war's far troubled shore,
And one returned, but boy of mine,
I'll see thy face no more.

I will not ask the reason why,
And I will not repine,
Why one should live, and one should die,
That handsome boy of mine.
I hide within my bosom's core,
This explanation dear,
In heaven my boy was needed more
Than he was needed here.

1918 — JUNE — 1918

Ther' is a choir invisible, it hath a mission laudable,
Listen an' I'll tell yuh—hark to what I say;
That choir may be invisible, but, oh, it's not inaudible,
An' you kin hear its anthems every night an' day.
Every star in heaven his happiness is spoutin',
Every little weed is singin' to yuh;
Hearken to the roses and the iris blossoms shoutin'
"Hally, hally, hally—hallyluyah!"

Yer eye sight isn't very good, at least that's what I'm fearin',
Yuh see a world of beauty, but you miss a sweeter thing;
Go on your knees an' ast the Lord fer to improve yer hearin',
So's you kin hear the chorus when the pussy willows sing.
Fresh an' strong the music flows, clear an' young an' crispin',
All the grasses in the glebe are singin' to yuh,
An' if you stoop an' listen yuh kin hear the pansies lispin'
"Hally, hally, hally—hallyluyah!"

Away afar in Picardy, the angry guns are roarin',
An' all that land is quakin' with shock of sword and shield,

But way up o'er the smoke clouds the pretty birds are soarin',
Droppin' notes of sweetness upon the stricken field.
An' what are they singin'? Open-mouthed you wonder,
Very well, I'll tell yuh, I hope it's good 'twill do yuh,
Them birds are singin' mostly above the battle thunder,
"Hally, hally, hally—hallyluyah!"

It's June in far-off Flanders, it's June in lands Canajin,
It's June in every loyal heart that fights to foil the foe,
The birds are chanting victory—let's ketch the gold contagion,
An' holler "Hallyluyah," an' drive away all woe.
It's June-tide all around us, the summer's all before us—
Listen, oh, my people, hear me callin' to yuh,
Let's jine the splendid anthem — let's swell the noble chorus,
"Hally, hally, hally—hallyluyah!"

THE BROODING PARTRIDGE

Behind a log, amid the dull, dead leaves,
Against her eggs her gentle bosom heaves;
Oh! what can save her when above, below,
Afoot, a-wing, her foes by hundreds go?
But like a heap of soft dead leaves she broods,
Unhurt, unharmed amid those solitudes!
The skilful coon, the velvet-footed fox,
The noiseless sis-owls and the hov'ring hawks,
The black guerillas of the sky have sought
For her in vain and they have harmed her not.
Ah! they have sought and searched and never found her,
For lo! the loving arms of God are round her!

Brood on in safety, little mother, brood
Upon thy nest amid the solitude;
For thou shalt show thy nestlings to the ferns
That watch beside thee ere the Junetide turns;
Oh what a holiday to lead them all
Mid yellow stubble in the golden fall!
How proud to hear them beat their drums afar
Like joyous soldiers in a happy war!
The joy to hear above all other things,
The rushing thunder of their stormy wings!
In broad daylight or 'neath the midnight moon,
Brood on in safety, for thou art immune.

And thou, beloved, tender little waif,
Fear nothing, pretty one, thou, too, art safe;
The she wolf, golden eyed amid the brush,
The sudden panther hiding in the bush,
The snake, agleam with many a shining spot,
Shall charm thee, harm thee nor alarm thee not!
If thou couldst only see the hill, the glen,
With fiery chariots blaze and armed men,
In forest maize or in the thronging street,
The aye Unvanquished army keeps thy feet.
Fear not, no foe can harm, alarm or wound thee,
Go safely, girl! for God's right arm is round thee.

THE KNOT-HOLE IN THE FENCE

She was quite eleven and he was just twice seven,
And their love was very pretty and intense;
And they used to kiss each other when out of sight of mother
Thro' a handy little knot-hole in the fence.

He would hand her candy and she would hand a rose,
And the pleasure that it gave them was immense;
The little lady always had to stand upon her toes
To reach the little knot-hole in the fence.

They whispered pretty nothings, as you may well suppose—
The little chap in love is seldom dense—
For the handsome little scapegrace used to kiss her on the nose
Thro' the darling little knot-hole in the fence.

He grew big and awkward, she grew big and smart;
She put her hair up nicely—he put up his pence.
They drifted far apart, with a pang in each young heart,
And they shunned the little knot-hole in the fence.

He grew great and famous—she divinely fair,
Some sensible good angel drew them hence;
While his secret he was keeping, one day he caught her peeping
Thro' the blessed little knot-hole in the fence!

Is it necessary here that the sequel should appear,
How their loves were very pretty and intense?
You may laugh and you may scoff, now they're both on one side of
That naughtly little knot-hole in the fence.

"A NODSAS GOODSA WYNKE——"

Darling, I've been thinking what I'd like to buy you,
A dainty Christmas present for my pet;
In all the great emporiums there's nothing I'd deny you—
The trouble is I don't know what to get!
Won't you give a hint to me—of light just give a glint to me,
And all my sore anxieties you'll salve;
Make a little sign to me—drop a little line to me
And tell me what you'd like to have!

All Summer and all Fall assiduous I've sought you,
Of happiness you are the font;
But I could ne'er forgive myself to think that I had bought you
Something that you didn't want.
My heart is in a riot, oh, tell me on the quiet,
Put your finger on the safety valve;
Don't you be absurd to me, but send a little word to me,
And tell me what you'd like to have!

Oh, do not be offended—Love shall plead a truce to you,
That is why I do and dare;
I'd like to buy a present that would be some little use to you,
Something that you'd keep or wear.

There'll be a pretty prize to it—Ah!—won't you put me
wise to it?
I know I venture very much—but yet,
From miseries dispel me—my darling, won't you tell me
The present that you'd like to get!

Christmas will be here in just about a week or two,
Still we are so far apart;
Won't you give your lover just one fleeting peek or two
Thro' the casements of your heart?
Send a little bird to me—a message—just a word to me—
Oh, won't you from your throne unbend?
Dear, drive away my fear and whisper in my ear
The Present that my Soul shall send!

THE PASSING YEAR

One by one the sad days falter, falter,
The lengthening nights prevail,
With pliant knees before the golden altar
The old year takes the veil.

The number of her lovers dwindle, dwindle—
Ah, once they did adore!
Their torch-tipped tongues with yearning love shall kindle
Her aching heart no more.

Dear God! How sweet she was, how tender, tender;
How strong, superb; how frail!
To-day, robed in her fleeting, faded splendor,
She goes to take the veil.

The song at last is ended, it is ended,
And thus her story runs;
She enters in the convent chill, but splendid,
To join the other nuns.

And in the gardens—oh, such gardens, gardens!
Such chambers wide and deep!
And on the wall an armored angel wardens
The drawbridge and the keep.

They, listening, hear outside the portals, portals,
That stand such stress and strain,
The wailing voices of poor, pleading mortals:
"Come back to us again!"

How vain is all their pleading, is their pleading!
How foolish and how vain!
For this pale nun (ah, wearily) receding,
Cannot return again.

But she may send a sister, a sweet sister,
To come on New Year's Day,
And when the Christmas Child hath blessed and kissed her,
Ah, then together they

Shall lead and we will follow after, after,
To find the golden shore;
The new sweet year shall know more joy and laughter
Than all that went before!

THIS WHEAT MEAT LAND OF OURS

Now I'll sing a song so grand,
Of this our native land,
Where the milk of human kindness never sours;
There's plenty things to eat,
Some are bitter, some are sweet,
In this wheat meat land of ours.

Take the two together,
We have flannel, we have leather,
Both of them our daily lot endow'rs;
The country it is full
With women and with wool,
In this wheat meat land of ours.

From the igloos to the castles,
Most everybody rastles,
With a ham bone for to exercise his powers;
You've a permit for to choose,
Twixt the buttermilk or booze
In this wheat meat land of ours.

We have cordwood, we have lumber,
We have wheat lands without number,
And white coal comes from wondrous water pow'rs;
Why should you bend your knees to death,
Why should you starve or freeze to death—
In this wheat meat land of ours?

These lines may seem chaotic,
But I am patriotic,
And big enthusiasm in me towers;
They may not know or need you,
But someone's sure to feed you,
In this wheat meat land of ours.

THE METEOR FLAG

Once on a time when days were dark
And Britain's sons were plunged in gloom,
A song that made the mourners hark,
Went tossing upward like a plume;
It banished every gathering cloud,
Across the stormy land it flew,
And I will now repeat aloud
A few of its bold lines for you:

"The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return."

From heart and lip they caught the song,
They chanted it in hut and hall;
In cadences it swept along,
With challenge like a trumpet call;
The silent shores, no longer still,
Were wakened by the sound, I wis;
From mountain top, from hill to hill,
The anthem thundered on like this:

"The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return."

The foeman o'er the sullen lea
Uneasy heard the chorus far,
The meteor flag across the sea
Flamed skyward like a burning star.
They heard the cry of vengeance rise,
'Gainst wrong that years and years had nursed,
And well they knew they'd lose the prize,
When on their ears the chorus burst:
"The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return."

And as it was so shall it be,
Now and forever and amen;
Let's cheer our mother o'er the sea
And send if need ten thousand men;
Join in the song from far and near,
Loud let the splendid anthem ring;
Our foes will tremble when they hear
The British folk stand up and sing:
"The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return."

CANADA FIRST

To Home and Country shouts we raise!
For Home and Land to Heaven we cry!
In Home and Country let us live,
For Home and Land we stand to die!

This land us bred, these hills are ours,
These mighty floods that seaward roll;
We know no masters but ourselves,
We know no bounds this side the pole!

God gave to us these reaching woods,
The spreading lakes we sail upon;
We hold them for our children's right
And who is he intrudes thereon?

To Home and Country shouts we raise!
For Home and Land to Heaven we cry!
In Home and Country let us live,
For Home and Land we stand to die!

YA-HONK!

"Ya-Honk!" Up north out on a bay
The rocking flock of wild geese lay,
The gander swimming round them all,
His voice "Ya-honk! Ya-honk!" let fall.
He looked above and saw the snow
Come sifting to the earth below;
He felt his wives were better far
Where warmer winds and waters are.
"Ya-honk! Ya-honk!" They know him well:
His meaning none hath need to tell:
He counts them all with anxious eye,
Then southwards like the storm they fly;
While ever and anon the note
Falls from his red and panting throat—
"Ya-honk!"

"Ya-honk! Ya-honk!" His eye is red,
His bill is yellow, and his head
Is strong and broad, his breast is white,
The grey upon his back is light,
His neck is wondrous straight and long,
His wings are mighty, swift, and strong;
His voice is masculine and harsh,
It falls on meadow, mere and marsh—
"Ya-honk!"

"Ya-honk! Ya-honk!" 'Tis in the night
He takes his wild and weird flight;

He leads his wild wives thro' the sky,
With winkless and unerring eye;
He guides them safe from dark to dawn,
He comes—"Ya-honk! Ya-honk!"—he's gone.
The list'ning hunter cries, "Yo-ho!"
He, scornful, drops his voice below—
"Ya-honk!"

"Ya-honk!" He leads them with that cry;
They, faithful, follow him or die.
"Ya-honk! Ya-honk! Ya-honk!" he calls,
None faithless from his rude rank falls.
They urge their wings, the wind's outstript,
The cobwebs from the moon are whipped;
They fondly follow him who leads—
Who sows the swamps with sounding seeds—
"Ya-honk! Ya-honk!"

"Ya-honk! Ya-honk!" To-night afar
They rest their wings where waters are;
They rock and rest in some still lake
Which they for months will not forsake;
But when the spring time comes again
And skies are wet with April rain,
Go, listen on the marshy shore,
You'll hear them surging north once more;
But fear not if you are alone
To hear a voice fall like a stone—
"Ya-honk!"

HORSE AND HORSE.

Lady, have you got a hubby?
Kiss him every day;
Even if his chin be stubby,
Kiss him every day.
Remember he hath got a bump
Of self-conceit you mustn't thump;
And even if he is a chump,
Kiss him every day.

Make the gilly think he's wise,
Kiss him every day;
Could lick a man of twice his size,
Kiss him every day.
Make him think he's pretty, too;
Never raise a hulla-balloo;
But, my dear, whate'er you do,
Kiss him every day

Make your cuckoo think he's smart,
Kiss him every day;
The idol of your wifely heart,
Kiss him every day.
Tell him he's a perfect bute,
Make him think he's mighty cute;
And tho' he's but a big galoot,
Kiss him every day.

Tell him that you pray for him,
Kiss him every day;
And something always say for him,
Kiss him every day.
Praise his nose, his ears, his feet;
Tell him that he's quite complete;
God forgive you—say he's sweet—
Kiss him every day.

Try and be his guiding star,
Kiss him every day;
You know not what his troubles are,
Kiss him every day.
Once in every little while
He'll meet with trouble—spare his pile—
Always meet him with a smile,
Kiss him every day.

DO THEY THINK OF ME AT HOME?

Here in my cabin lonely, amid the gulches wooded,
Where winds like hounds ahunting come and go;
Where every pine and spruce tree and every hemlock's hooded
And every silent birch is shawled in snow;
I hear the wolf pack howling the cedar branches under,
And unfamiliar stars bedeck the dome,
And Christmas time is coming! I wonder, ah, I wonder,
Do they think of me at home?

Far up in the wilderness alone I'm pioneering,
Where once a day it's midnight and it's noon;
I've got a small log cabin and my front yard is my clearing,
Where the snow, gem-dusted, glitters 'neath the moon.
Oft-times the big she-wolf parts the cedar boughs asunder
And through my silent field her people roam;
And as I hark and watch them I wonder—ah, I wonder,
Do they think of me at home?

And when the gales are blowing, and every tree-top's rocking,
And a bitter night succeeds an angry day;
'Tis then I think of childhood, how I used to hang my stocking
In the little, dear old homestead far away.

When the stormful cedars carol and the wind-whipt pines do thunder
And the great white owl flits past me like a gnome,
I stand amid my snowdrifts and wonder—ah, I wonder,
Do they think of me at home?

Oh, I love the splendid star time when the silver moon is beaming,
Then all my homesick trouble takes its flight;
For I see the dear home faces that I love when I am dreaming—
God grant that I may dream again to-night!
I do not hear the black bear through the pussy willows blunder,
Nor hear the river thresh itself to foam;
For when asleep and dreaming, oh, I do not have to wonder
Do they think of me at home.

THE KHAN'S BOOK OF VERSE

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